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DAPHNE COWLEY B.A.

TOWARDS THE ASSESSMENT OF JUNIOR CHILDREN'S WRITING IN
THE CREATIVE MODE.

offered for the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy,
Open University

School of Education : Curriculum
August 1983.

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ABSTRACT.

The study charts three different attempts to assess children's writing for its creativity in language with a view to introducing organization and a greater measure of objectivity into an area of subjective judgement.

The preface explains the needs for such procedures, such that they can be used in the classroom for the guidance of teachers and pupils. It also gives reasons for choosing three methods of assessment

- (i) the semantic differential (Osgood, 1957, 1968)
- (ii) focused holistic scoring (Greenhalgh, Townsend, 1981)
- (iii) personal statement (Patton, 1980),

A review of the literature examines the tradition of literary appreciation, and considers the approaches that have been made towards children's writing through impression marking, intellectual development, criterion referenced assessment and the development of writing skills.

Following a pilot study involving four teachers (Chapter 3) the form of the semantic differential used to assess seven pieces of second year juniors' writing was used again by thirteen teachers. The rank orders obtained showed a large measure of agreement but did not demonstrate reasons for discernment in detail.

Focused holistic scoring, which involves the description of score points which may be allotted to children's writing by deciding in advance what features may arise and how far they are commendable, was carried out on twelve examples of fourth year juniors' work by sixteen teachers. This procedure produced a more discerning response which demonstrated the demands of the teachers, which were made explicit in written comments which could be compared with the grading. (cont. after page 1.)

'Towards the assessment of junior children's writing in the creative mode'

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Abstract

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In the personal statements it was possible to isolate the most common and some individual demands likely to be made by teachers when assessing creative writing. The predominance, in practice, of the conviction that a personal, subjective response to creativity is valid and valuable cannot be ignored in any further attempts to encourage analytical judgement based on standards of excellence.

The cause for concern.

'The flying boat was a mail carrier. The after half of the cabin was piled high with bags among which the Halberdier servant luxuriously disposed himself for sleep. Guy remembered the immense boredom of censoring those letters home. Here and there one came across a man who through some oddity of upbringing had escaped the state schools. Those wrote with wild phonetic mis-spellings straight from the heart. The rest strung together clichés which he supposed somehow communicated some exchange of affection and need.'

(Waugh, 1952, p.312)

When I first asked children to write for me in the English lesson I had no very clear idea of what I expected, but I did hope to engender some compositions which would come 'straight from the heart'. Delighted with some results, I enthused about them to my colleagues and discovered chasms of disagreement that I did not know existed. In joining battle with those who barred poetry from their classrooms, both that of children and that of adults, I became a great deal more specific in my expectations and my demands. Praise had to be justified and condemnation explained. There were also teachers who thought as I did about the importance of creative writing, and yet our reactions to the same piece of work could be alarmingly different. I became aware that in many schools the children would be subject to dual standards in an area of great individual sensitivity, involving what one might describe as literary morals.

Although it is possible to pursue our own further education in literature, the results can leave us still unable to meet the challenge of the uninformed, unskilled and uninhibited expositions of primary school children

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making their first attempts to write poetically.

The teacher is equipped to correct grammatical mistakes and spelling, to demand factual accuracy and competent calligraphy, by the standards of received English: the rules are the same for children as for adults.

But prompt children to explore in words their reaction to an emotional or sensual experience, and the result will defy evaluation in conventional terms: any multiple judgement will demonstrate the variation in standards applied by teachers whose own experience, both personal and professional is at odds with that of their colleagues. And yet, if children write in a personal way, particularly in the primary school, they do so for their teacher. We have ^{been} exhorted, and rightly so, to vary and enlarge the purposes for which our children write.

'... the ability to write includes the capacity to adjust what is written to different audiences and social relationships. ... it was acknowledged that the range of purposes for which a child might write also differs'. (APU,1981,p.82)

'The social context in which writing usually takes place, and the writer's relationship with this audience, were both emphasised as important factors in writing performance'. (Ibid.p.83)

But the kind of writing we are asking for in which we endeavour to encourage and even inspire poetry assumes and fosters a relationship in which experiments do not result in embarrassments, and help comes from a person rather than from an inanimate resource. We are obliged to meet an act of faith with kindness and encouragement, and there is no way we can escape that responsibility.

This may mean that children's writing is improperly assessed. Concern

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must arise for the standards put before them, as being worthy as well as being possible to achieve: and concern also, that teachers, in being encouraging and mindful of their charges' sensitivity, hold in their own minds a respectable image of the form and content to which they will give their most generous praise.

The search for objectivity.

It would be an arid task to set out to reduce any poetry, even the most unpretentious, to the exigencies of a completely objective assessment. It would, by its very nature, contradict that essence of successful communication of someone's subjective judgement of an emotion, a flower, say, or an explosion, which is inherent in poetry. What one might hope to do is

- (i) to encourage a more educated and reasoned judgement which would withstand criticism and develop useful, positive discussion.
- (ii) to design a convenient procedure for approaching the assessment of writing in the poetic mode which could be used in the classroom, with diagnostic implications.
- (iii) to promote a resolution of the teachers' dilemma, i.e. how to comment on mediocre writing without discouraging personal commitment,

Methods considered.

The material to be assessed would involve three main variables

- (i) the teaching situation; any preliminary classroom experience immediately preceding the composition.
- (ii) the pupils.
- (iii) the assessor; his knowledge of the two previous items, and his professional expertise.

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Initially it was thought that a prediction exercise, attractive because of the reproducibility of the stimulus to write, would be a convenient starting point. However, this is not a common starting point from which to provoke poetry, and it tends to set a style pattern which restricts child-authors from choosing their own. It was thought preferable to use a more usual kind of introduction involving the discussion of suitable responses to the given task.

Some considerable thought was given to the amount of pre-knowledge the assessor should have of the pupil-author. While it seemed reasonable to provide anonymous typewritten copies of the scripts, thereby eliminating undue attention to the niceties of presentation,

'The evidence from this experiment supports the hypothesis
that handwriting influences the assessment of essays.'

(Briggs,1970,p.55)

it was not clear how much attention other teachers would pay to the help received by a class (e.g. vocabulary to use) in their teacher's introduction. There was also the question of the personal tastes of an assessor, and their validity. It was important at this stage to focus upon the quality of the writing itself, rather than on the many different ways it might be approached.

In the event a pilot study was carried out in which four assistant teachers employed in primary schools were asked to rank seven pieces of third year junior children's work before and after reading a typescript of the preliminary classroom activity (Chapter 3.) They were also asked to rank some published poems, presented to them anonymously, extracted from children's anthologies and about a common subject, in order to give some indication of how these assessors would rate conventionally acceptable (but not sophisticated) poetry. Hudson (1970) adapted the experiment of Terman (1930) to find out whether convergent or divergent thinkers yielded

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most to authoritative pressures. Hudson comments

'The experiment is obviously at fault in failing to take
difference in literary sophistication into account'

(Hudson,1970,p.23)

This pilot study gave the four teachers an opportunity to perceive such differences, in their ranking of poetry written by adults. They were also asked to apply a form of the semantic differential to the children's scripts.

Osgood (et al. 1957,1968) invented the semantic differential to measure the connotative meanings of concepts as points in 'semantic space'. He considered that a perception, which would show an attitude, could be expressed in three dimensions: evaluation (or goodness), potency (or strength), and activity. Pairs of adjectives which were opposite in meaning to each other were found to be associated, in groups, with one or other of the dimensions, or 'factors' as they were called. The evaluation factor could (as in the case of this study) be the only one needed, provided the bipolar adjectives elicited varied responses from different individuals, and provided they covered the semantic space. In using the semantic differential to assess attitudes towards a concept such as 'school' it is possible to use scales with factor identifications, the strengths of which are known from Osgood's research. These were not applicable to the identification of attitudes to literature, and for this study pairs of adjectives were chosen from those commonly used in standard works of literary appreciation. (e.g. Richards,1929). If this method of assessment proved to be fruitful it should be possible to produce factor identifications by further research.

Kerlinger (1973) suggests:

'It may be possible to study children's values and attitudes by having teachers and other judges rate their compositions on an evaluation form of the SD.' (Ibid.p.580)

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This seemed to offer an opportunity to focus attention on desirable and undesirable aspects of the writing, but still leave a comfortable degree of choice in the hands of the marker.

Consequent upon the results of the pilot study, a group of primary school teachers were asked to apply the same form of the semantic differential, after hearing the tape-recording of the original preliminary activity in the classroom, to the seven pieces of children's work. During a Cheshire Education Authority in-service course the opportunity presented itself to have this procedure carried out at one sitting by twenty teachers, thirteen of whom completed the whole assessment (Chapter 4).

In spite of the considerable measure of agreement demonstrated within this group, this occasion produced verbal comments which showed clearly that the influence and judgement of the teacher in the classroom would not willingly be subject to the restrictions of a five point scale. Some teachers found it distressing to be asked to make an evaluation of this kind of personal response without reference to the previous literary exploits of the child author, even though the child would be ignorant of the process in hand. It seemed a matter of some urgency to obtain more detailed statements by individual teachers about their approach, if the development of this or any other assessment procedure was to have any relevance to the needs of class teachers.

Another promising technique seemed to be that explored by Greenhalgh and Townsend (1981, pp. 811-822), although they were considering the practice of 'focused holistic scoring' on an exercise in writing instructions, rather than on flights of fancy. In the version used here the written outcomes of the class discussion of a picture showing a fantastic landscape were graded according to five general descriptions of the kind of work which might be produced as a result, arranged in order of merit.

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To begin with, the score point descriptions used by Greenhalgh and Townsend were examined for their relevance to pieces of writing by second year juniors. A set of scripts written on one occasion in response to a picture was used. (Chapter 5). Each score point consisted of several items, and it was found that these could be reconstructed to express the demands and expectations of a teacher promoting creative writing as illustrated in the actual results of a session in the classroom. The choice of criteria was guided by attending closely to the analysis of four sources given by Greenhalgh and Townsend: major and specific rhetorical demands, developmental capabilities and the evaluative situation. They found it necessary, although the writing task given as an example was to describe the construction of a swing and therefore concerned to exploit the prosaic rather than the poetic, to give credit for 'expressive' writing :

'An expressive writing exercise draws upon the writer's imaginative ability to invent and connect details to express ideas or feelings'.

(Greenhalgh and Townsend, 1981,p.812)

Their intention in using focused holistic scoring was to focus on a single, overall purpose. In describing the picture that purpose became mainly descriptive, and the criteria of judgement could be adjusted accordingly. The method was initially intended for use in large-scale writing assessments, but the authors recommend its use in the classroom to help students and teachers attend to 'content rather than surface features of the piece of writing' (Ibid.p.822).

An in-service course again provided an opportunity, to ask a group of 16 teachers to use focused holistic scoring on a collection of 12 scripts written about the same picture by fourth year juniors, using the same

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Score points. These scores were awarded with a view to extending the teacher's perception of the children's ability, and were not disclosed to the children. The teachers were also asked to write comments on the scripts as they would do in normal classroom practice, and a critical comparison was made of these remarks with reference to the Score point awarded (Chapter 6). The material distributed as in the in-service course may be found in Appendix B.

The singer of the song?

Attendant upon all these ventures which required teachers to translate a subjective response into a criterion referenced grading was their distaste for this approach. In an attempt to give this distaste an articulate voice, and to allow its defence, a group of teachers known to be sympathetic to the practice of imaginative and personal writing in school were approached personally, and by letter. (Reproduced p.101). Primary teachers in the main, one secondary view-point is included. Their response may be seen in full in Appendix C, and these personal statements give a dramatic exposition of the sensitive and idiosyncratic ethos underlying creative composition in words. It has been possible to isolate, in Chapters 7 and 8, the main areas of agreement and some indications of how assessment is actually being carried out.

These personal statements are couched in the language teachers used in discussing, among themselves, their children's writing. They prompted the consideration of the use of interviews (Patton, 1980) which would allow more discursive and revealing opportunities for practising teachers to explain their commitment, and one such interview is included, (Appendix C), with comment (Chapter 8). Reference is also made to an interview with poet (p. 208) and an evaluative essay made by a teacher (p. 211) not originally concerned with this study.

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Matters in doubt.

It must be accepted that human fallibility will be at a maximum in any assessment that involves taste, educated or otherwise. However we can make sure that we are continually extending and revising our ideas and experience so that only the best literary standards are exemplified in school. When even what these standards are is in question, teachers do well to make a wide survey of the cultural options, and to avoid at all costs the narrow view of the isolated pedagogue. Perhaps even teachers dedicated to the cultivation of literary prowess should look more closely and more responsibly at what exactly they are asking children to do in the creative writing lesson.

It would be encouraging to find some analytical format for describing good poetic writing, which could be applied to imaginative and emotional writing, and give consistent results when used by different teachers. The exploration of some of the possibilities, even within a very limited application, could bring a more objective ingredient into an area of assessment that is, by the very nature of the response asked of the writer, extremely subjective. The extent to which a teacher's judgement is subjective can be dangerously counter-productive to the very originality and individuality so highly prized in poetic composition. This study examines

- (i) the feasibility of using the semantic differential :
 - are there any indications that it may illustrate
 - (a) a measure of agreement?
 - (b) why a piece of work is to be preferred above
(or less than) others produced at the same time?
- (ii) focused holistic scoring: could this enlighten us as to what demands are being made on children in a specific instance?

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- (iii) the commitment of the individual teacher: why do earnest teachers retreat from a detailed examination of their children's poetry? What exactly do they expect?

Speculation

The future of our literary heritage is indeed bleak if we cannot expect at least some measure of agreement among teachers who are in sympathy with the exercise of poetic talent in the classroom. What this study would hope to discover is, not only a concentration of agreed priorities in response to the challenge of assessment, but also a way of creating bastions of prescribed, particular requirements of excellence which can be defended against those who would confine us to unrelenting prose.

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The Study of Literary Appreciation.

For generations the educated Englishman has been expected to be able to recognize and refer to a body of knowledge associated with the revered writings of his forefathers, generally referred to as 'English literature'. Sometimes a privileged contemporary, is, in his own life-time, included in the roll of honour. Occasionally there is some dispute among the hierarchy as to the excellence of some author, past or present, and in the critical argument there is kept alive critical awareness and discernment. The demands that Richards (1929,1964), Leavis (1932,1948,1962,1969, 1972) and Eliot (1917,1921,1948,1951,1960) have made upon students and upon the literary world are a consequence of literary development, a cultural development in language that has been overwhelmingly accepted as important and almost sacred.

'The school is required to perpetuate and transmit the capital of consecrated signs, that is, the culture handed down to it by the intellectual creators of the past.'

(Bourdieu,1971,p.178).

This veneration of literary heritage has imposed upon the education system an obligation to produce pupils well-versed in the English classics, and this is reflected in the examination syllabuses of 'O' and 'A' level examinations. Even to day, when it is possible to obtain distinction in 'O' level English Literature without having read a play by Shakespeare, and to become a student in our most respected universities without having made any formal study of literature at all, there is still an authority in the voices for drama and poetry. The Philistine in the staff room decries the poetry lesson and confirms his own ignorance.

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The development of literary appreciation is a maze of lively debate and academic conflict. The major study of Richards (1929,1964) is still found to have general applications and much to say to tutors and students now.

It was a reaction against the 'study of literature as a set of inert facts' (OU Course E 263,1981,p.22), more concerned with biography than the interaction between a writer and his society. His analysis of the literary criticism of university students centres upon verities useful to all those considering the worth of words, and leads to the kind of supporting statement we need on our banners when we enter the curriculum debate.

'(Poetry is) our chief means by which subtle ideas and responses may be communicated ... It is the most important repository of our standards.'

(Richards,1929,p.248).

He has the courage to be articulate about the most tender embarrassments that we are led into by enjoying poetry without question.

'... a writer may use a metaphor and a reader take both its sense and feeling correctly without writer or reader being capable of explaining how it works.'

(Ibid.p.223).

At the same time he insists on an organized exploration of sense, feeling tone and intention, which rejects with reason and accepts with insight. Leavis was obliged to defend his enthusiasm as well as his point of view.

'... to clarify the perception, arrive at the judgement, see the significance and define the

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approach in the first place may ... call for a tension that strikes him (the critic) as over-intensity.'

(Leavis, 1932,p.160).

The linguist has also contributed his interest in words, as a means of hiding messages. He is more interested in codes than meanings. In the study of stylistics an attempt has been made to marry literary criticism with linguistics.

'The purpose of stylistics is to link the two approaches by extending the linguist's literary intuitions and the critic's linguistic observations and making their relationship explicit.'

(Widdowson,1975,p.5.).

This is a sophisticated approach which extends one's insight when reading the poetry of adults, but it is not generally applicable by teachers to the work of primary school children.

The exercise of the critical faculty by the established critics is, in the context of this study, notable not so much for what writing they disagreed about, but for their insistence upon exploratory evidence, upon judgement which attempted to be precise about taste and intuition.

The Appreciation of Children's Writing.

Holbrook (1961) brought into the classroom the serious apprehension of children's capacity to make an adequate response to a worthwhile text, and campaigned for the detailed exploration of the young writer's attempts to put experience into his own words, in his own format. There was at this time unprecedented encouragement given to teachers to allow children to 'do their own thing' with words, and a plethora of creative writing burst forth around those souls who felt that, at least, the

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children's own poetry was respectable. This was a period when children's literature was expanded and supported by some excellent authors, (Mayne, 1966: Garfield, 1967) so that the contemporary material available in classrooms was enriched wherever it was welcome. The accent was, and has been, heavily upon the production line. The time allocated in schools to the promotion of that writing which is a personal response to a bewildering variety of starting points was justified on every hand. A study such as that at Bristol University (Pym 1956) stands out as showing concern for an estimation of the achievement of children, for some kind of assessment of the finished product.

Although the title of the study is 'Free Writing', the conditions in which the children responded to a poem were very far from those advocated in, say, 'Teaching Poetry' (Reeves 1958) or 'Let the Children Write' (Langdon 1961). They were, in fact, part of an 11+ selection procedure. More typically, the Newsom Report (1963) came to the conclusion that the overriding aim in the teaching of English must be the personal development and social competence of the pupil. Literary activity was embraced as some kind of panacea, and it is, in retrospect, with little surprise that we find a note of caution in the next government report.

'It is extremely difficult to say whether or not standards of written and spoken English have fallen. There is no convincing evidence available... Our survey given no evidence of a large body of teachers committed to the rejection of basic skills and not caring who knows it. It is facile to assume that all manner of weaknesses can be ascribed simply to the wholesale spread of permissive philosophy.'

(Bullock, 1975, para.1.8.)

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That 'permissive' philosophy' was commented on, in the report, by a 'group of teachers'.

'Many teachers see 'creative writing' as the high point of literacy. We need to re-thing this: over-emphasis on it has distorted a whole view of language. It usually means, in actuality, colourful or fanciful language, not 'ordinary', using 'vivid imagery'. It is often false, artificially stimulated and pumped up by the teacher or written to an unconscious model which he has given to the children. It is very often divorced from real feeling.'

(Ibid. para 1.4.)

They were, without perhaps realising it, making a very similiary plea to that of Richards (1929) when he appealed to his students to come to poetry with suspicion as well as joy, judgement as well as ecstasy. There is responsibility inherent in the promotion of creative art to set standards and to examine purposes. It has always been part of adult criticism.

'It is vile evil that literature is become so much a trade all over Europe. Nothing has gone so far to nurture a corrupt taste, and to give the unintellectual power over the intellectual. Merit is now universally esteemed by the multitude of readers that an author can attract... Will the uncultivated mind admire what delights the cultivated?'

Sir Egerton Brydges, circa 1820.

(Williams, 1963, p.52.)

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There has been, subsequently, some attempts to treat children's writing to a more convincing examination of its literary promise, to provide 'convincing evidence', which approach the problem from four points of view.

Assessment by Comment: Impression marking.

In the first place, there are the various attempts at literary appreciation of the text and the ability of the young author, expressed as oral or written comment.

Any response to a piece of writing involves some kind of assessment. Some of the most interesting are the responses of an individual to individual effort, as recorded by Holbrook (1967) about the work of secondary school pupils. Among his general criteria he sought particularly for sincerity, shown in freshness, energy, rhythm and feeling for language displayed in writing, and for realism on the page. Burgess (et.al.1973) provides similarly useful examples of the marking of the work of older pupils.

'The Arts in Schools' (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1982.) is aware of the subjective nature of this way of working, and points out the dangers and also acknowledges the caution needed, to recognise that some aspects of literary art cannot be quantified.

'Evaluation and assessment involve personal judgements by teachers and examiners and have much to do with values, feelings and intuition. Most assessments are not clinically objective, nor can they be. Nor are they made more reliable, objective or sensitive by condensing them into a single letter or number.

--- Only very limited aspects of educational attainment

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can be directly quantified' (p.85).

The 'concept of mastery' (Gagne and Briggs 1979, p.237) cannot be applied when dealing with 'how well' or 'how much' writing is poetry, because no one can produce an 'error-free performance'.

(Ibid).

The use of classified comment to organise multiple impression marking has been used to assess 'O' level papers (Schools Council 1966), in which case the assessment may be said to be criterion referenced.

But primary school teachers are restricted, in their comments to the children, to those which the children they teach will understand, though they may in their own minds classify and assess their pupils' progress in another way. Mulford (Jones and Mulford, 1971) makes an interesting comment on six lines written by a ten-year-old.

'The poem may not be memorable as a poem, except in being a child's performance; but, to my mind, the boy was writing as a poet.' (Ibid. p.115).

We can understand this: the boy's teacher welcomes the prescience of 'that one talent'. But how can the writing be assessed for the boy? Something has to be said to this child, preferably encouraging, but he is unlikely to benefit either from ecstatic praise or close analysis.

'I know that you (teachers) have a difficult job. All the same I get tired of hearing about the marvellous "Poems" written by eight-year-olds. Very young children do not write poems and they never have done.'

(Scannell, 1977,p.74).

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This is the view of a poet 'in print', who may be forgiven for setting his sights so high: and perhaps we should do better to have our reach exceed our grasp.

Barnes (1976) again in secondary schools, puts teachers' attitudes to written work in a range of categories from Transmission to Interpretation. His approval is given to the interpreter.

'(He) saw the purpose of writing in terms of cognitive development ... aiding the writer's personal development ... concerned with pupil's attitudes to the task ... aware of the context.

He saw marking primarily in terms of making replies and comments ...' (Ibid. p.140).

This, of course, is a kind of assessment, probably more suitable to imaginative writing than the right or wrong marking carried out by the teachers whose attitudes were in the Transmission category. But the latter 'saw the purpose of writing primarily as the acquisition or recording of information', the kind of writing that can be score marked. It seems unfair to describe only this kind of marking as assessment, when 'replies and comments' are the very stuff of literary appreciation.

The employment of the category has attracted many researchers, notably early in the primary field being Pym, (1956). Although the scripts being assessed were not returned to the children, the writing being part of a formal test, the qualities noted could be envisaged as being part of a marking procedure in the classroom. The children were asked to respond, 'write what comes to mind', after reading a poem.

The categories were :

1. Repetitive (the words of the poem in prose).

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2. Stimulated memory.
3. Identification with self.
4. Barely related
5. Illuminating personal experience.
6. Negative (confused literal interpretation)
7. Detached (the poem as a poem).
8. Unique effort (Ibid p.19).

Why one may ask, can any interpretation be said to be confused if the children were asked to write what comes to mind? Is it wrong to be critical? (no.7) And does originality supercede all other traits? On another occasion a picture (of abominable quality) was provided for children to 'write about (it) in any way you like', but the assessors looked for specific results such as : 'Does the child go out of the room?' 'Is there a view of the picture as a whole?' The questions can be answered, categorically, but it is doubtful whether they could be a guide to the literary excellence of the children's writing, or help anyone to appreciate it. One must welcome, however, an attempt to think positively about the work of eleven-year-olds.

Harpin (1976) is equally positive, and includes recommended action as well as comment. His method of assessment includes classroom procedure, but for the moment let us consider his attitude to all kinds of writing:

'General criteria for judgement and appreciation need to be listed, examined, and their relevance for apprentice writers carefully weighed ... order, coherence, appropriateness of emphasis, absence of ambiguity (while acknowledging the special case of literature), effectiveness of purpose, interest, inventiveness, euphony.' (Ibid.p.143).

He asked that, in the early stages, order, coherence and clarity are

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regarded as more important than how writing reads, how it sounds. In the area of personal writing, as we have already seen, these priorities are not always seen so clearly, or as being the same.

Assessment by Considering Stages in Intellectual Development

The second group of studies are those which approach children's writing from a developmental aspect. Having accepted that their work is immature, one way of assessing it is to consider how far it approaches the kind of writing we expect from an adult: the adult being, of course, educated and gifted. Most of these schemes assume that we need to achieve a population which is a good deal more generally expert in literary pursuits than would seem to be the case from, say, the impression given by a school's parents.

This is not a new idea. Coleridge may be quoted (Rogers,1970,p.149).

'Children are much less removed from men and women than generally imagined: they have less power to express their meaning than men, but their opinion of justice is nearly the same. This we may prove by referring to our own experience.'

Nowadays proof is not so easily come by. Barnsley and Wilkinson (1981) have made a study of the development of moral judgement in children's writings.

'Most traditional marking schemes allow for judgements of "content" without ever specifying what constitutes development to maturity in the affective and moral domains. Judgements of that nature are left in the intuitions of teachers.'

(Ibid.p.3).

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They concluded that a 'cumulative stage theory' of moral development was more appropriate than a 'discrete stage theory' when analysing children's writing. In any case, the questions of prejudice and moral standards must be met by each teacher on his own ground. Barnsley and Wilkinson (1981) link thought, feeling and attitudes so that development in morality is assumed to reflect development in the expression of feeling, an unconvincing argument to anyone who has to work with latter-day Puritans. Wilkinson does recognise an affective mode in his study of the assessment of language development, the Crediton Project (Wilkinson et al., 1979). He produces a multi-dimensional model which includes cognitive, affective, stylistic and moral measures but he is constrained to say:

'It is commonly assumed that one is helping children to maturity through language, but this never seems to be defined.' (Ibid. p.63).

'The product of a category system is not intended to replace the teachers' experience by a machine, but to increase awareness of the bases of judgement. -- the models offered here are very tentative.' (Ibid. p.75)

The Schools Council Project (Martin et al. 1976) was about the written language of 11-18 year olds, and it used a popular method of classifying their efforts advocated by Britton (1970, 1975). He distinguished between three modes; the transactional, the expressive and the poetic. Expressive language is that which we use most readily.

'Writing which is much closer to talk than most school writing is at present should be encouraged right across the child's years in school - and across the whole curriculum. We believe that

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such writing would free the writer to think in writing and to learn through written language in the same way that he already uses talk.'

(Martin et al., 1976,p.61)

Britton (et al., 1975) saw language as being used in two roles; the spectator and the participant. This was an extension of the work of Harding, who associated literature with the role of onlooker. (Harding in Cashdan and Grudgeon,1972)

' - when we use language to recount or recreate real or imagined experience for no other reason than to enjoy it or present it for enjoyment, we are using language in the role of spectator; when we use language to get things done, we are in the role of participants. -- Expressive language straddles the participant/spectator distinction -- expressive language is able to move freely from one role to the other.' (Britton, 1975,p.92).

Poetic writing (the spectator role) uses language as

'an art medium. The function of a piece of poetic writing is to be an object that pleases or satisfies the writer; and the reader's response is to share that satisfaction. -- the nature and degree of the author's satisfaction must vary very much from one piece to another.' (Ibid. p.90).

Transactional writing (the participant role) is the language to get things done, such as informing, advising, persuading and instructing. 'Transactional' was identified in our more formal efforts in prose.

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The expressive function was conceived as

'the matrix from which a writer moves in one of two opposite directions (the transactional or the poetic), (and this) provided the basic structure of our model.' (Britton et al. 1975 p.15)

In the Schools Council research growth from an expressive matrix appeared to be demanded, in the secondary school, at such a rate that there was an overall predominance of transactional writing, over 60% (Ibid.p.163), and within that a predominance of informative writing which showed a classificatory bias. Expressive writing dwindled from 6% in the first year to 4% in the seventh year (Ibid.p.197). The report states:

'(Expressive writing) represents, we believe, the move into writing most likely to preserve a vital link with the spoken mode in which up to this point all a child's linguistic resources have been gathered and stored.' (Ibid.p.197)

'(It is claimed that) the importance of writing is declining rapidly -- Even if this prophecy proved largely true, we should still want to claim a developmental role for writing in school.'

(Ibid.p.201)

A school of thought which attracted considerable support deprecated the demand for transactional writing too early in school life.

'The demand for impersonal, unexpressive writing can actively inhibit learning because it isolates what is to be learnt from the vital learning process - that of making links between what is already known and the new information'.

(Martin et al,1976,p.26)

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Expressive writing, as a term applied to the written outcomes of all kinds of classroom activities, tends to justify all kinds of emotional and imaginative verbal exercises as being necessary to literary development. It sets no standards because the children's expressive writing becomes entirely a means, which, if it assessed as an end product, may hamper development. The maturer products, poetic and transactional writing, could be said to be undervalued in the anxiety to practise expressive writing as a necessary learning experience.

The London model, as it is sometimes called, drew teachers' attention to developmental characteristics hitherto discouraged as being simply poor examples of what children could write. The question of assessment became obscured in the attempt to encourage all the intermediate stages in reaching the kind of written work needed by students. Bruner (1975) has warned us that our pupils are bound to meet theoretical concepts, which they must learn to understand, which cannot be translated into ordinary language.

'Teaching subject matters is bound to specialize in the metalinguistic function as it proceeds, ... directing the attention to the code upon which communication is based.' (p.48. in Williams,1977)

Another commentator on the London model, Dixon (1975), sees the 'transactional' and 'poetic' not as alternatives of language use, but as emerging in turn in the same piece of writing. This stance is taken by the linguistic school (as opposed to the philosophical) who have demanded and sought category systems which they see as being arrived at more scientifically. Williams (1977) points out that the two ends of the spectrum may be equally skilled:

'poetic writing ... legal documents. Both seem to be equally valuable human achievements.' (Williams, 1977,p.42)

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This classification, then, widely discussed and used by teachers to justify the value of the outcomes of writing in the classroom, poses a dilemma which the secondary school must resolve. At primary level the chief danger seems to be that of postponing assessment, in the interest of fostering spontaneous utterance. It is a danger with which adults may have to contend.

'The declaration of the autonomy of the creative intention leads to a morality of conviction which tends to judge works of art by the purity of the artists' intention and which can end in a kind of terrorism of taste when the artist, in the name of his conviction, demands unconditional recognition of his work.'

(Bourdieu, 1971,p.165)

The assessment of children's writing as it develops can probably be more clearly seen in a longitudinal study such as that in progress at Bristol University. Kroll (et al. 1980) has described their methods of collecting and describing children's writing, which were in each of the four primary modes of discourse proposed by Kinneavey (1971): Expressive, narrative, referential and persuasive. Analysis of the writing was carried out on 'several levels': linguistic, structural, content, and overall quality. The aim of the project, 'to obtain a rich and comprehensive description of children's writing abilities', has produced much material that can have little bearing on poetic quality. The over-riding feature to be admired appeared to be maturity.

'... looking at Wendy's clause length statistic for this one piece of writing, we might suspect that she is an immature writer... an unfortunate judgement, because an examination of the piece itself... leads one to

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believe Wendy is a rather advanced writer.'

(Kroll et al. 1980.p.59)

The method of their qualitative analysis, to identify
'those specific features which add up to create
the impression that a text is thoughtful,
perceptive and imaginative - or, in some
cases, the opposite'.

(Kroll et al. 1980,p.72)

was based on the work of Odell (1977). Six intellectual processes were identified as being involved in writing: Focus, Contrast, Classification Change, Physical Context and Sequence. In comparing two texts specific linguistic clues to these intellectual processes are listed and counted. This seems a most promising, (if time consuming) method of approaching the texts objectively, but the example quoted was unconvincing. Ann's 'Happiest Moment' was compared with Sandra's, to the following conclusion:

'But from Ann's enumeration of the events of a
day in the park, it is difficult to know why she
found this experience so memorable.'

(ibid.p.75)

When I read that piece of writing, it seemed that it was those very events, recognizable to any other child as self-evidently happenings of importance, that made her day. Sandra's effort was a little more mature in style, but less vivid. It would be interesting to see how these pieces fared in the impression marking situation, and how they would be ranked in an overall holistic assessment.

The Crediton Project (Wilkinson et al. 1979 and Barnsley and Wilkinson, 1981) has produced a most searching list of criteria which examine development in children's writing. Coincidentally the writing tasks they

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asked the children to carry out were extraordinarily similar to those used at Bristol. They were chosen to demand four different styles: autobiography, narrative, explanation and argument. Each task could be examined for the stylistic features of syntax, verbal competence, structure/organisation, cohesion, reader awareness, appropriateness and effectiveness. There were also the writing models to consider; presenting stages in development in the cognitive, affective and moral attitudes of the writer in hierarchical form. In a recent application of this procedure, by a group of teachers meeting informally, to the writing of seven and eleven-year-old children who carried out the task: 'What do you think would happen if you did not have to go to school?' it was found to be time-consuming and sometimes clumsy, but it was most interesting to see how it demonstrated that these older children were no more mature in their attitudes than the younger ones, only superior in their use of stylistic features. This kind of descriptive hierarchy would seem a more promising way to approach the assessment of any kind of children's writing, but there was no attempt to discriminate between qualities except as part of the developmental process. Braithwaite (et al.1981) has suggested that markers may disagree because of

'the differential desire among tutors to appear socially acceptable.'

(Ibid.p.45)

Such objections appear somewhat trivial alongside the impressive apparatus put forward by the Schools Council (1966), both for marking mechanical accuracy and multiple impression marking. It was found essential to ensure that all those marking the examination papers, which were at 'O' level, were clear as to the terms in which their instructions were expressed. A group of markers could agree if they were trained to do so.

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One of the few studies which involves ten to eleven year olds is that of Berse (1975) who was investigating their performance on an imaginative writing task when given an aural stimulus rather than a title. The most useful criteria proved to be vocabulary score, weighted index of modifying clauses, pre-verb length, and sequence. The last item recognises the difficulty in designing tests for this kind of writing.

'Sequence is that aspect of a composition reflecting internal cohesion and organic development. It depends as much on the sensitivity of the person evaluating the composition as it does on the inherent structure of that composition. This is an inevitable characteristic of any qualitative study of language and should be acknowledged as such.'

(Ibid.p.56.)

Berse used a five-point scale which looked for the writer's attempts and achievements in using four dimensions: plot, description, dialogue, expressive association. The whole study became an investigation of how to judge a piece of writing by testing and expressing the results numerically. Without being able to read the compositions one cannot say how these results matched the exercise of one's own sensitivity.

This use of criteria is in direct contradiction to that advocated in 'Measuring learning outcomes'. (OU.Course p 234,1981,p.12).

'Criteria ought not to be absolute. They must be kept under constant review in order to ensure that they provide appropriate targets.'

This gives support to the practice of defining criteria for each new assignment given to children, which is the aim of 'focused holistic

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scoring' (Greenhalgh and Townsend, 1981) and although it was originally intended for using with 'transactional' (Britton et al.1975) writing :

'concerned to satisfy the reader seeking information'

(Ibid.p.102)

focused holistic scoring has been used, in part of this study, to evaluate poetic and expressive writing.

Wilkinson and Hanna (1980) made an attempt to devise another model to enable us to describe development in style as the result of a series of choices made to diverge or not to diverge from the norm represented by the sentence. They put forward this definition:

'Maturity of style implies, not that one writes more and uses more complex devices, but that one can choose between them in terms of effectiveness.'

(Ibid,p.177)

The question of choice is also crucial in our use of vocabulary and of associations between words. It is this element of skill in writing that professes to be evocative and descriptive which is not always intended in the assessment which arrives at an estimation of the stage of progress of the writer rather than estimating the quality of his product.

In practising an analysis which used average sentence length, clauses, and a subordination index, Harpin (1976) had this to say :

'Using only the figures it is impossible to tell if a piece is good, bad or indifferent. The figure simply offers a guide to placing that writer's work on a series of scales of language maturity. At the same time, the way language

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is used affects very powerfully our qualitative assessment.'

(Ibid.p.63)

The exploration of the developmental stages in writing lends itself to qualitative expression which is more precise in its terms than the traditional literary criticism, and can extend the interpretation of statistical results, as Harpin suggests.

Assessment which is Criterion Referenced.

Thirdly, there are the attempts made to make assessments which may be described as tests or examinations. This is largely the field of secondary education.

In this sense evaluation is only part of assessment, which may include diagnosis and guidance as well as grading and selection. (OU.Course p 234, 1981,p.9.) Although these categories of purpose are interdependent, it is convenient to consider the provision of guidance and the exercise of diagnosis in the last section, 'Assessment related to the further development of writing skills'.

Cooper and Odell (1979) have produced an excellent summary of those methods that have been used in secondary level schools in the U.S.A. They depend largely on growth in writing ability measures, and there is a reminder that standardized tests can only measure editorial skills. The holistic evaluations are for the most part inapplicable to work produced in primary schools because of the sophisticated features examined e.g. density of information, but we may take the point that impression marking is valid, by a group.

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'When raters are from similar backgrounds and when they are trained with an holistic scoring guide ... they can achieve nearly perfect agreement in choosing the better of a pair of essays.'

(Ibid.p.19).

Follman and Anderson (1967, pp. 190-200) have investigated the reliability of such marking and suggested that the group of raters must have a homogenous academic background, in order to produce similar attitudes and values. Experiential backgrounds which differ are likely to cause unreliable results.

The Primary Survey Report (NFER.1981) describing a whole battery of tests in reading and writing, was intended to enquire into 'the state of the nation' as regards language performance, and it did not innovate in marking procedures to any great extent. The writing activities carried out by children in primary schools which were most likely to produce creative writing were those for the purpose of description:

- (a) Sustained description of a place or object.
- (b) Description and expression of feelings towards what is described, and the 'imaginative narrative based on given characters and settings.' (Ibid.p.85.)

All the writing, which included nine different purposes, was impression marked by a panel of experienced primary teachers for writing ability. Ten per cent were marked analytically according to the following set of criteria:

- 1. Content and organization.
- 2. Appropriateness and style.
- 3. Grammatical conventions.
- 4. Orthographic conventions.

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There was no attempt to deal with the creative factor in writing as a separate issue, and indeed the report concludes:

'the findings also lend support to the assumption that in assessing writing performance we are dealing with a unitary, if complex trait.'

(NFER,1981,p.118)

This marking procedure has been continued in an extension of the survey (A.P.U. 1982,p.4) to writing tasks in general. The results of the survey are concerned with 'sufficient control of written language conventions for what they wrote to be understood on first reading' (ibid,p.5). The excitement and balm of shared experience, the serendipity of metaphors, are never mentioned, or 'the choice of a device to communicate a particular meaning.' (Clark in Pugh et al.,1980, p.165)

Much attention is given to differences between the achievements of boys and girls, and poetry is only recognised in a study of attitudes.

'More boys than girls preferred factual writing and more girls preferred letter and poetry writing. ... for many 11 year olds, enjoyment in writing was identified with the creation of an exciting story.'

(A.P.U., 1982,p.5.)

This conclusion, and others concerned with the differences between girls and boys, may be drawn from a study of 'performance' but does nothing to help our discernment of how the tests may advance curriculum debate. Blenkin and Kelly (1981) are critical of monitoring testing organized on a national basis because of the danger that schools will accentuate in their syllabuses the criteria that are going to be tested, which will inevitably be those which are easiest to test. They point out

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the difficulties encountered by an exploratory group on aesthetic development.

'many people experienced in this field are convinced that no comprehensive or adequate conceptual model for aesthetic experience yet exists.'

(ibid.p.150)

This may mean that tests for elusive qualities such as poetic merit will not be found, and so the qualities themselves will be undervalued. Brown (1980) is also concerned that the difficult areas will be abandoned in testing science skills.

'Only a limited attempt is being made to test the less easily definable skills like creative thinking and imaginative reasoning and their less reliably measurable outcomes.'

(Brown,1980,p.79)

On the other hand the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (1982), committed to recommending a curriculum 'developing the capacity for creative thought and action' and 'the education of feeling and sensibility' (ibid.p.141), says:

'We firmly endorse the principle of educational accountability' (ibid.p.81)

'... the appropriateness and usefulness of criterion referenced tests in the arts should be fully investigated.' (ibid.p.143).

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Assessment Related to Development of Writing Skills

In considering the fourth aspect, assessment with a view to subsequent teaching, the Gulbenkian Report again gives clear leadership to those teachers who want to use the opportunities provided by creative writing to give 'feedback and encouragement' (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1982,p.84).

'Learning to master the grammar and syntax of a language --- and using the language to explore and express ideas are both important activities for the child. They may be closely related in practice, each growing naturally from and into the other. But they imply different types of objective and different approaches to, and criteria for, evaluation.'

(ibid.p.84)

As assessment with such a dual purpose in mind can be made in the kind of informal discussions between teacher and pupil which the Gulbenkian Report sees as an integral part of education, and in judicious impression marking. Thornton (1980) makes the point:

'It is a curious feature of our education system that, by eleven, the idea has become deeply ingrained that writing is an activity which requires you to dash down words on paper, and then forget about them. It is a misconception that underlies the failure of so many pupils significantly to improve their ability to write during their years at secondary school. Writing has become ... a series of one-offs, with little or no development between.'

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He is most concerned with the writer's ability to use the writing system to convey his meaning. One senses that, although he has many good suggestions for writing activities that teach, he is not particularly sympathetic towards the teacher who spends time helping children to make their own personal statement effectively. When attempting to deal with a whole class we should not forget that it is the divergent thinker (Tucker and Smithers, 1977) that writes most fluently, elaborately, and at length. Davidman (1980) concluded that

'For most of us the beginnings of creativity are rooted in the successful imitation of basic recipes.' (ibid p.25)

From this standpoint, the basic model, the young writer can learn to choose, and be guided in his choice.

When Martin (in Jones and Mulford, 1971) deprecates 'taught models' she fails to acknowledge that they are examples of the 'all sorts of language experience' from which she wants children to choose what they feel to be appropriate (p.74). What is at fault is not the idea of having models - in this case standards of excellence - but in not having the best or enough. The teacher, as well as the child needs to learn how to make an educated choice. Preference which is random and irresponsible is just as deplorable as using reactionary resources. Assessment which includes directing children towards 'models' is commenting in a most positive way upon children's potential as well as their achievement. When the assessment of imaginative writing is made in a learning situation it has been found fruitful to suggest further reading (Holbrook, 1961) or publish a well-presented version (Barnes, 1976) or use the writing of a group to develop themes (Lynskey, 1974). This does not preclude the development of skill, which can be highly motivated in a

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situation where an emotional response is demanded.

'To separate the study of language from its use is to cut children off from their own expertise and to make advances in mastery most difficult.'

(Harpin, 1976,p.128)

He has not lost faith in teachers' ability to mark constructively:

'try to make time to talk to each child about his writing but ensure that positive comments are written on the piece too; the effects last longer and are immediately accessible.'

(ibid.p.143)

Holbrook has remained consistent and persistent in his conviction that teachers must 'hear what the child is trying to say', and, having listened, see in the child's writing the inkling of a mode or theme set down in classical literature, and to which the child can be introduced. The warmth of the reception to 'the little scrawls' depends, says Holbrook (1981), on the teacher's own literary experience without which he will be unable to match the enterprise of the child with that of the man. Holbrook has the gift of being able to read poetry aloud, in his own excellent way, and the choice of what he reads provides stimulus, standards, and sympathy. He is not concerned with adjectives, or free verse patterns, or whether the children would write more or better about something else.

Poetry begets poetry:

'what happens in a child when it is learning, or what happens with us when we are teaching it, can never be fully known: we rely on the ineffable because teaching is an art.'

(Holbrook, 1981,p.40)

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Some would prefer to rely on computers. Kerlinger (1973,p.532) describes a method of computer content analysis, used to grade essays, which correlated very well with human judgement. We should not deny the possibility that technology may well be able to do a great many of our marking chores, giving us more time to nurture the creative talents in our children and in ourselves. Harpin (1976) and Stenhouse (1975) recommend that children should be challenged to become critics of their own work.

Stenhouse's defence of the process model of curriculum design rests heavily on 'the quality of the teacher' (ibid.p.96) who becomes responsible for 'worthwhile activity' the designation of which depends on 'the critical reaction to the work done'. He is not discussing creative writing, but the point is applicable; that teachers can use assessment as a launching pad.

In the 'processes' versus 'products' debate, in which those assessments which assess 'products' do so because 'products' are usually easier to identify and manipulate (OU Course P234,1981,p.20), poetry does little to clarify the issue. The value of the poem, the product, must be emphasized but escapes definition.

Perhaps, if all teachers were perfect there would be no problem in the assessment of creative writing; but it will remain, however it is done and regardless of who does it, a subjective exercise.

The Pilot Study

This was not wholly concerned with the use of the semantic differential, although that was the feature chosen for an extended study. The assessors were four teachers employed in primary and middle schools and have been given the pseudonyms John, Mike, Phil, and Sam. The seven pieces of writing are referred to as A,B,C,D,E,F, and G, and can also be identified by the children's Christian names (Appendix A). They were produced in a class lesson by children aged 9-10 years, which was recorded and a transcript made of the tape. The last part of the assessment was concerned with five poems by adult writers about celebrating November 5th, referred to as P.Q.R.S. and T. These were

P.	GOLD, Mary	'November 5th'	Source unknown. ^{this text} (p.40)
Q.	REEVES, James	'Fireworks'	(Farjeon et al.1958)
R.	SCANNELL. V.	'Gunpowder Plot'	(Summerfield. 1968)
S.	DE LA MARE, W.	'Please to Remember'	(Summerfield. 1968)
T.	DUFTY, L.M.	'Fifth of November'	(Sibley, 1964)

The assessors were not informed as to the authors of these poems.

The assessment was divided into four parts. The instructions issued and the form of the semantic differential were as follows on p. 41.

CHAPTER 3. The Semantic Differential Part 1

POEM P. Source unknown.

November Fifth.

It is dark every night.

We have waited for this one;

Collected a waste cone

To set it alight.

Extra stars briefly take

All their life in one shining;

Leave a black bottle lining.

Other flames burn to make

Splendid cereal sounds,

As the wheels on the hoarding

Start colour exploding

In hot feather rounds.

Saints and devils again

See the dangerous barn dance

Of the flames of remembrance

Leave shells in the rain.

Mary Gold.

(See bibliography for sources of poems

Q.R.S. and T).

CHAPTER 3. The Semantic Differential Part. 1.

Instructions to assessors in pilot study

CHILDREN WRITING A to G

ASSESSMENTS

ASSESSMENT 1

These seven pieces of writing were written by children in school.

Spelling and punctuation have been corrected, but examples were chosen in which the amount of correction did not need to be excessive. Please read them so that you can, without any other information, rank them in order according to

- (i) literary merit. (ii) personal appeal

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

ASSESSMENT 2 should be carried out on the form provided, a separate form for each piece of writing (see following page).

ASSESSMENT 3 This entails reading the transcript of a tape-recording which was made in the classroom. It is supplied in an envelope. When you have read it, rank the pieces of writing again, changing the previous order if you wish to do so.

- (i) literary merit. (ii) personal appeal.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

CHAPTER 3. The Semantic Differential Part 1.

6.

7.

ASSESSMENT 4. Please read the poems, P.Q.R.S. and T. Rank them in the same way.

(i) literary merit.

(ii) personal appeal.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

CHAPTER 3. The Semantic Differential Part 1.

Instructions to assessors in pilot study: form for ASSESSMENT 2.

Please identify the piece of writing by letter A,B,C,D,E,F, **or** G. You are asked to make judgements about seven written exercises by rating each piece on each pair of adjectives. For the pair

good 1 2 3 4 5 bad.

the spaces may be described as

1 very good, 2 rather good, 3 neither, 4 rather bad, 5 very bad.

Distinguish as carefully as you can, and tick one space between each pair of adjectives. Trust your first impressions and work quickly.

1	intelligent	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	dull
2	naive	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	sophisticated
3	knowledgeable	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	ignorant
4	innovating	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	imitative
5	original	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	stereotype
6.	prosaic	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	poetic
7	direct	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	figurative
8	interesting	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	boring
9	terse	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	verbose
10	enthusiastic	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	indifferent
11	hesitant	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	confident
12	urgent	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	nonchalant
13	extravagant	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	economical
14	sensitive	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	insensitive
15	precise	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	vague
16	spurious	<u>1 2 3 4 5</u>	authentic

Thank you for your co-operation.

Please use this space to make any extra comments, if you wish.

CHAPTER 3 The Semantic Differential Part 1

These were intended to explore bias. The subjects were invited to exercise a choice which was not necessarily dependent upon their education or experience, but at the same time they were made aware that dual standards may apply to our ranking of creative effort. The format was suggested by the experiments of Hudson (1970,p.133) in his study of convergent and divergent thinking. He appreciated the 'differences in literary sophistication' (ibid.p.23) which he failed to take into account, and which were explored in the fourth assessment, using five poems which were supplied with a rank order by an 'expert'. The 'expert' knew the authors of the poems, and has some standing in the literary world; but he is not infallible.

The results are summarised in Table 1. This also shows a 'consensus' order of merit which is the result of treating the ranking given to the children's writing according to its literary value as if it were a voting procedure.

Assessment 2.

This used a form of the semantic differential based on that developed by Osgood (1968). He argued that a person's attitude towards an object is equivalent to the object's evaluative meaning for the person. A person's attitude to an object, in this case a piece of writing, could be measured by having the person rate the object on a set of scales with high loading on the evaluative factor. In this case the 'scales' were pairs of adjectives shown in Table 2, with the positive attribute indicated. It is necessary to reverse the positive and negative positions of the polar adjectives at irregular intervals to avoid bias in the assessor.

It must be clearly understood that the expression of the child's attitudes is being evaluated rather than the attitude itself.

CHAPTER 3. The Semantic Differential Part 1.

TABLE 1.

		Rank Order		Results of Assessments 1, 3 and 4.				
		Four teachers assessing seven pieces of children's writing						
		Rank	John.	Mike.	Phil.	Sam.	Consensus.	
Before reading transcript	1	D.(D)	D.(B)	D.(B)	D.(C)	D.	28	
	2	B.(E)	B.(D)	C.(D)	A.(E)	B.	22	
	3	E.(B)	A.(E)	B.(C)	B.(D)	E.	16	
	4	F.(F)	E.(A)	F.(F)	E.(A)	A.	14	
	5	C.(C)	G.(F)	E.(G)	C.(B)	C.	13	
	6	A.(A)	F.(C)	G.(E)	F.(F)	F.	12	
	7	G.(G)	C.(G)	A.(A)	G.(G)	G.	7	
After reading transcript	1	D.(D)	B.(B)	B.(B)	A.(D)	B.	25	
	2	B.(E)	A.(D)	D.(D)	D.(B)	D.	24	
	3	E.(B)	D.(E)	C.(C)	B.(A)	A.	17	
	4	F.(F)	E.(A)	G.(F)	E.(E)	E.	16	
	5	A.(C)	G.(F)	E.(G)	C.(C)	C.	10	
	6	G.(A)	F.(C)	F.(E)	F.(F)	F.	10	
	7	C.(G)	C.(G)	A.(A)	G.(G)	G.	10	
'Expert' Opinion.								
Published Poems.	1	R.(R)	R.(R)	R.(R)	R.(R)	R.		
	2	P.(Q)	Q.(T)	Q.(Q)	Q.(Q)	S.		
	3	Q.(P)	T.(P)	T.(S)	T.(S)	P.		
	4	T.(T)	P.(Q)	P.(T)	P.(T)	Q.		
	5	S.(S)	S.(S)	S.(P)	S.(P)	T.		

Letters in brackets refer to poems when putting them in a rank order to show personal preference.

Letters without brackets followed by full stop refer to poems when putting them in rank order to show literary merit.

CHAPTER 3. The Semantic Differential Part 1

TABLE 2.

Pairs of adjectives used in assessing children's writing

The plus and minus signs show where the polar adjectives have been reversed to counteract bias tendencies.

For the pair,

good	1	2	3	4	5	bad
------	---	---	---	---	---	-----

the spaces may be described as

1 very good, 2 rather good, 3 neither, 4 rather bad, 5 very bad.

+ intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	dull
- naive	1	2	3	4	4	sophisticated
+ knowledgeable	1	2	3	4	5	ignorant
+ innovating	1	2	3	4	5	imitative
+ original	1	2	3	4	5	stereotype
- prosaic	1	2	3	4	5	poetic
- direct	1	2	3	4	5	figurative
+ interesting	1	2	3	4	5	boring
+ terse	1	2	3	4	5	verbose
+ enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5	indifferent
- hesitant	1	2	3	4	5	confident
+ urgent	1	2	3	4	5	nonchalant
- extravagant	1	2	3	4	5	economical
+ sensitive	1	2	3	4	5	insensitive
+ precise	1	2	3	4	5	vague
- spurious	1	2	3	4	5	authentic

CHAPTER 3. The Semantic Differential Part 1

TABLE 3.

An example of the scoring procedure

Each pair of bi-polar adjectives represents a positive and a negative quality. The positive adjective is not always put first to avoid influencing the assessment. This is indicated by the + and minus signs which must be applied to the addition of the tally. 'Very good' and 'very bad' score 2, 'rather good' and 'rather bad' score 1 and 'neither' does not score.

The ticks entered on separate forms by John, Mike, Phil and Sam were collected on to one form and totalled as shown. The tally was also made arranging the positive elements in the left hand column, as in Table 4, in which case the columns were totalled to check the result.

A list of totals for each piece of work in CHILDREN WRITING, Appendix A, may be found at the end of Table 4 (3 pages).

TABLE 3.

An example of the scoring procedure

CHILDREN WRITING	G. DAVID					TOTAL ASSESSMENT FOR ONE CHILD
+ intelligent	1	/	2	3	4	dull -2
- naive	1	///	2	/	3	sophisticated -7
+ knowledgeable	1		2	/	3	ignorant 0
+ innovating	1		2	/	3	imitative -3
+ original	1		2	/	3	stereotype -2
- prosaic	1	///	2	/	3	poetic -4
- direct	1	///	2	///	3	figurative -6
+ interesting	1		2	/	3	boring -4
+ terse	1		2	///	3	verbose -2
+ enthusiastic	1	/	2		3	indifferent -1
- hesitant	1		2	/	3	confident 0
+ urgent	1		2		3	nonchalant -2
- extravagant	1		2		3	economical +3
+ sensitive	1		2	/	3	insensitive -3
+ precise	1		2	///	3	vague -1
- spurious	1		2	///	3	authentic -1
						Total -35

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TABLE 4. (3 pages)

Summary of the assessments by John, Mike, Phil and Sam using the semantic differential, applied to writing from seven children.

The five-point scale is scored. +2, +1, 0, -1, -2.

	A. KAREN	B. RACHEL	C. JAMES
1	1 2 1	2 2	2 2
2	1 1 2	4	1 1 2
3	3 1	3 1	1 3
4	1 1 1 1	2 2	1 1 2
5	1 1 2	2 2	1 1 2
6	2 2	2 1 1	3 1
7	2 1 1	1 2 1	1 2 1
8	4	1 3	1 2 1
9	2 2	3 1	1 2
10	2 1 1	1 2 1	1 1 2
11	1 2 1	2 2	1 1 2
12	1 2 1	2 2	3 1
13	3 1	2 2	2 1 1
14	2 1 1	3 1	1 3
15	1 2 1	2 2	2 2
16	1 1 1 1	2 2	3 1
	=====	=====	=====
	5 21 23	17 35 3 2	7 16 18 2
	10+21 -23	34+35 -7	14+16 -22
TOTAL SCORE.	8	62	8

Numbers 1-16 indicate the pairs of bi-polar adjectives shown in Table 1. The tally has been arranged with the positive mark placed in the left hand column in each case. A list of totals for each piece of work in CHILDREN WRITING, Appendix A, may be found at the end of this table.

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TABLE 4.

	D. JULIE				E. ANNA.			
1	3	1			1	2	1	
2	2	2					1	3
3.	2	2				3	1	
4	1	2	1			1	3	
5	1	3			1	2		1
6		4				2	1	1
7	1	1		1 1			2	2
8	4				1	1		2
9		4					2	2
10	1	2	1			2	2	
11	1	3				1	3	
12		2		1		1	1	2
13		3		1		2	1	1
14	1	2	1			3	1	
15	2	1	1			3		1
16	2	2				2	1	1
=====								
	21	34		3 1		7	26	12 1
	42+34		-5			14+26		-14
=====								
TOTAL SCORE.		71				26		
=====								

CHAPTER 3. The Semantic Differential Part 1

TABLE 4.

	F. LEE.				G. DAVID.				
1	1	2	1		1	2	1		
2		1	1	2		1	3		
3	1	1	2		1	2	1		
4			3	1	1	2	1		
5		1		3	1		3		
6	1	3			1	1	2		
7	1	1	2			2	2		
8			1	3	1	1	2		
9		2	2		2		2		
10		1	1	1	1		3		
11		2	1	1	1	2	1		
12		1		3		2	2		
13		1	2	1	3	1			
14		2	1	1	1	1	2		
15			1	2	2	1	1		
16	1	2	1		1	1	2		
=====									
	5	18		17	3	2	15	22	16
	10+18		-23			4+15		-22-32	

TOTAL SCORE.			5					-35	

	TOTAL SCORE.
A. KAREN	8
B. RACHEL	62
C. JAMES	8
D. JULIE	71
E. ANNA	26
F. LEE	5
G. DAVID	-35

CHAPTER 3. The Semantic Differential Part 1

Results of Assessment 2.

As the study involved only four subjects, John, Phil, Mike and Sam, the results were used as simply as possible to obtain a rank order which could be compared with the results of the other assessments most easily. The list of bi-polar adjectives, and the location of the positive end, is shown in Table 2. The summing up, taking into account +ve and -ve values, is shown in Table 4. This gave the order D.B.E.A.=C.F.G.

It was also possible to find out the rank order assigned to the children's work by scoring each subject's assessment in this way: first choice, 7; second choice, 6; third choice, 5; and so on, totalling the results to give those shown as 'consensus' in Table 1. It should be noted that they are remarkably similar, and support the results from the semantic differential exercise. i.e. D.B.E.A.C.F.G.

The rank order assigned to the children's pieces of work by individual teachers was compared with the rank order arrived at by using the results given by using the semantic differential, in Table 5.

Correlation co-efficient

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6 \sum D^2}{n(n^2-1)}$$

TABLE 5. Comparison of rank order:

Rating by individual/Rating by group indicated by semantic differential.
Four teachers assessing seven pieces of children's writing.

ρ	John.	Phil.	Mike	Sam
ρ	0.86	0.34	0.86	0.61

Results of Assessments 1 and 3.

The subjects were expected to make some changes in their assessment after reading the transcript.

Phil stands out as making most alterations, and was also found to show least agreement with any kind of consensus or expert opinion. But John, Mike and Sam show rather less agreement with the D,B,E,A,C,F,G, order after reading the transcript of the lesson than they did before. (Table 6)

This is most clearly shown by the scatter graphs, Table 7.

TABLE 6. Comparison of rank order : literary merit/semantic differential

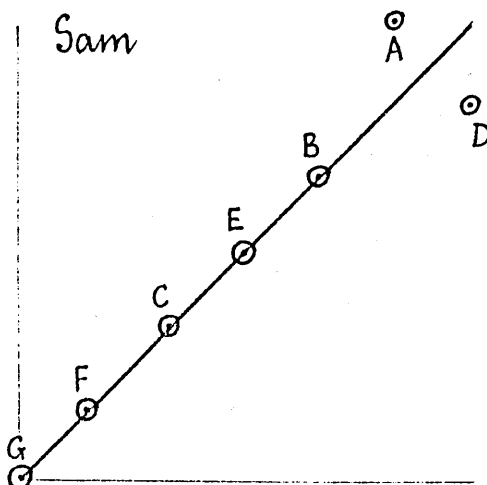
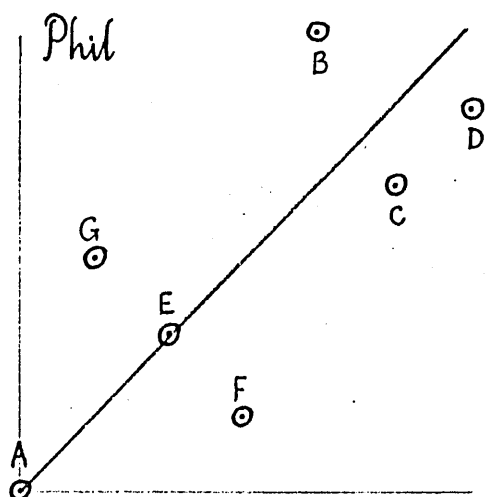
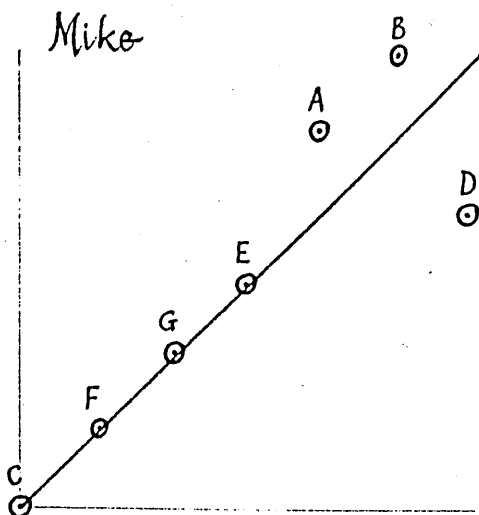
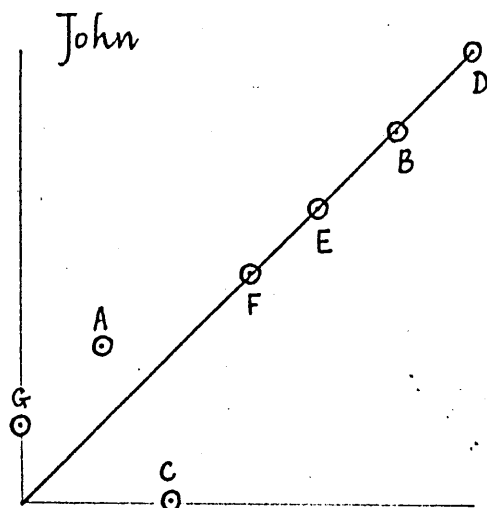
Four teachers assessing seven pieces of children's writing.

Assessing the children's writing: before and after reading transcript

		John	Phil	Mike	Sam
<i>p</i>	before	0.86	0.50	0.82	0.89
<i>p</i>	after	0.82	0.50	0.68	0.77

TABLE 7

Four teachers assessing seven pieces of children's writing



Graphs showing correlation between the first and second assessments of children's writing (A-G). by rank order, showing preference ascending.

CHAPTER 3. The Semantic Differential Part 1

Personal Choice

This nomenclature serves the purpose of making the subject aware of a possible distinction between personal appeal and literary merit, and shows when this distinction has been made.

A rank order was obtained from the semantic differential exercise.

TABLE 8. Comparison of rank order: personal appeal/semantic differential

Four teachers assessing seven poems

	John	Phil	Mike	Sam	
ρ	0.82	0.43	0.93	0.46	(Children Writing (A-G))

Only Sam changed his mind after reading the transcript, showing much closer agreement with the semantic differential result ($\rho=0.96$). The personal appeal of the published poems used in Assessment 4 showed no tendency to agree with the opinion of the experts. Neither did the subjects' estimation of the poems' literary appeal. For what they are worth, the correlation figures as shown below.

TABLE 9. Comparison of rank order: literary merit/expert opinion
personal appeal/expert opinion.

Four teachers assessing five poems

	John	Phil	Mike	Sam	
ρ	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.5	literary merit (Poems. P-T)
ρ	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	personal appeal

The only indication of consistency was that poem R was placed first on seven out of eight occasions, which might lead one to suppose that it is easier to decide what is good than what is bad. These are the kind of results one might expect from the non-specialist teacher in primary/middle schools as these subjects were.

Indications from pilot study

- (i) The semantic differential approach does not help Phil to come into line with the more acceptable assessments of the other three.
- (ii) The best children's writing stands out most easily, as does the best adult poetry.
- (iii) More information about the way in which the children's writing was produced does not necessarily lead to a greater measure of agreement about its merit.
- (iv) The semantic differential technique was able to distinguish between the quality of writing in a more specific and useful way than rank order alone. The two better examples, D and B, were highlighted, and in addition it may be seen that, for example, all four subjects agree that Rachel's writing shows sophistication. Knowing the children concerned, I find the comments arising from this exercise most pertinent. E and A are distinguished in a way that is not possible using rank order, and in the same way G is isolated as an immature writer. Although correlation has been sought, it is important in assessing this kind of writing that there is some way for the varied individual response, which the teacher seeks to encourage, to be appreciated, at the same time as a high standard of literary merit is promoted. This kind of analysis should help teachers to discuss their opinions within a framework which also indicated where and what kind of individual assistance is needed by pupils.
- (v) It is possible that working through the bi-polar adjectives may in itself affect the judgement of the subjects. It may be better to ask for it to be done last of all.
- (vi) The question of consistency must arise at some stages, in order to discover if subjects change their opinions, after a period of

CHAPTER 3. The Semantic Differential Part 1.

Indications from pilot study.

time. This would be a separate issue from whether or not information about the lesson affects assessment, and concerned with exploring the semantic differential as a tool.

- (vii) There were (surprisingly) no questions from the subjects about the terms used, and only one extraneous comment, praising a poem. In one case 'space' was interpreted as meaning _____ rather than _____ but the intention of the subject remained clear.

It was decided to use the children's writing A-G with the same list of bi-polar adjectives, as material to be assessed by a larger group.

CHAPTER 4. The Semantic Differential Part 2.

Development of pilot study

This was an extension of the application of the same semantic differential as that used in the pilot study, applied to the same group of children's writings, (Appendix A), but by a larger group of teachers.

The teachers were working together at a school during a series of four evening in-service courses for teachers of English in junior and primary schools. They were given all the poems and the form listing the bi-polar adjectives, and asked to use the five-point scale of the semantic differential to assess the poems. A tape was played of the introduction to the time of writing, made in the classroom and including suggestions for vocabulary, children's and teacher's. A transcript of this tape was used in the pilot study (Appendix A). At the same time a projector showed slides of the children, according to who was speaking on the tape and including those whose writing had been presented for assessment.

Thirteen teachers completed all seven assessments. These teachers are referred to as 'the assessors', and are referred to by Christian names beginning with the letter 'm'.

There are four tables of results which present a count of the ticks on the semantic differential form in four different ways.

CHAPTER 4. The Semantic Differential Part 2.

Table of results A shows the individual scores arrived at by treating each assessor's use of the given form of the semantic differential for each piece of children's work, as illustrated by 'Mabel' (p. 64)

Table of results B shows how these scores may be expressed as a rank order. It is from these rank orders that the correlation coefficient

ρ in Table of results D is derived, by comparing them with the rank order derived from Table of results A.

Table of results C shows the score which each piece of children's writing received on each pair of bi-polar adjectives.

Table of results D shows two applications of the results. By summing the scores in Table of results A across the rows it is possible to arrive at a figure which indicates how positive the assessor was in marking the scripts in general. By comparing the rank order set out in Table of results B with that obtained from totalling all the scores in Table of results C, correlation coefficients are derived which indicate the measure of agreement between the assessors.

CHAPTER 4. The Semantic Differential Part 2.

Table of results A. Summary of the five-point scale applied to the given form of the semantic differential by each assessor. There were thirteen assessors and seven pieces of writing, A-G.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Mabel	14	12	7	14	11	0	8
Malcolm	-1	9	-8	26	-6	-3	4
Mary	5	19	-1	28	0	3	-1
Matt	4	18	-2	23	8	-4	9
Maurice	9	14	7	19	2	5	7
Max	12	21	17	15	-20	-1	2
Melanie	17	27	0	-2	26	-3	-1
Mick	2	14	-4	15	-7	-3	-10
Milly	12	3	11	-4	17	6	1
Mimi	15	8	2	23	1	3	17
Molly	12	9	0	22	5	-7	-5
Mona	13	5	-1	7	13	2	5
Muriel	5	5	13	9	3	-1	-5
Totals	119	164	41	195	53	-3	31

These totals give the rank order D,B,A,E,C,G,F.

(Rank order derived from pilot study : D,B,E,A,C,F,G)

The procedure for deriving these scores from the marks given on the five-point scale on the semantic differential form is illustrated by 'Mabel' on page 64.

CHAPTER 4. The Semantic Differential Part 2.

Table of results B. Summary expressed as rank order. Thirteen teachers assess seven pieces of writing.

Mabel	D	A	B	E	G	C	F
Malcolm	D	B	G	A	F	E	C
Mary	D	B	A	F	E	G =	C
Matt	D	B	G	E	A	C	F
Maurice	D	B	A	C =	G	F	E
Max	B	C	D	A	G	F	E
Melanie	B	E	A	F	D	G	C
Mick	D	B	A	F	C	E	G
Milly	E	A	C	F	B	G	D
Mimi	D	G	A	B	F	C	E
Molly	D	A	B	E	C	G	F
Mona	A =	E	D	B =	G	F	C
Muriel	C	D	A =	B	E	F	G

These rank orders were compared with the rank order given by the total scores shown in Table of results A. viz. D B A E C G F

The result of this comparison is shown in Table of results D.

CHAPTER 4. The Semantic Differential Part 2.

Table of results C. Collective response to each piece of writing. Seven pieces of writing are assessed by thirteen teachers. The adjectives are given in full on the semantic differential form which was used by the assessors (Appendix A). The adjectives are arranged here with the + ve element first.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Intelligent/dull	16	17	4	16	5	1	4
sophisticated/naive	6	14	-7	12	-2	-6	-10
knowledgeable/ignorant	19	15	-1	15	5	9	9
innovating/imitative	5	8	4	7	1	-8	1
original/stereotype	7	14	3	11	1	-4	4
poetic/prosaic	-3	2	-5	15	6	-14	-18
figurative/direct	-17	-7	-8	4	-13	-18	-15
interesting/boring	12	14	4	14	6	2	3
terse/verbose	-5	4	9	6	10	2	3
enthusiastic/in-different	20	17	5	15	5	3	9
confident/hesitant	16	12	-2	16	8	7	10
urgent/nonchalant	10	9	7	13	2	-6	-3
economical/extravagant	6	6	10	7	10	16	11
sensitive/insensitive	7	15	5	15	-1	-6	2
precise/vague	16	14	6	14	7	9	8
authentic/spurious	13	11	9	14	2	11	13

This table indicates how the total score obtained for any one piece of work in CHILDREN WRITING A-G (Appendix A) is made up of the marks allotted on the five-point score for each pair of bi-polar adjectives.

It is the basis for the qualitative interpretation of the results with respect to the overall response to each piece of writing.

CHAPTER 4. The Semantic Differential Part 2.

Table of results D.

Name of Assessor	Positive response of assessors derived from	$\rho = 1 - \frac{6 \sum D^2}{n(n^2-1)}$
	Table of results A	Comparison of rank order: individual result/total result.

Mabel	66	0.88
Malcolm	21	0.61
Mary	53	0.80
Matt	46	0.75
Maurice	63	0.73
Max	46	0.54
Melanie	64	0.39
Mick	7	0.75
Milly	46	-0.21
Mimi	69	0.39
Molly	36	0.96
Mona	44	0.46
Muriel	29	0.50

Comparison of rank order:
pilot study-total result
0.97

Together with Table of results A, these results are the basis for the qualitative interpretation of the results with respect to the thirteen assessors' individual responses to each piece of writing.

CHAPTER 4. The Semantic Differential Part 2.

An example of the scoring procedure

This is how 'Mabel' used the form of the semantic differential provided at the in-service course to assess the poem written by KAREN, CHILDREN WRITING A in Appendix A.

To obtain a score it is necessary to know which pairs of bi-polar adjectives have been placed with the positive element first, and which with the negative. This information has been added after the assessment had been made. 'Very good' or 'very bad' score 2, 'rather good' or 'rather bad' score 1, 'Neither' does not score.

CHILDREN WRITING A. Assessor: 'MABEL'

Please identify the piece of writing by letter A,B,C,D,E,F, or G. You are asked to make judgements about seven written exercises by rating each piece on each pair of adjectives. For the pair good 1 2 3 4 5 bad the spaces may be described as 1 very good, 2 rather good, 3 neither, 4 rather bad, 5 very bad. Distinguish as carefully as you can, and tick one space between each pair of adjectives. Trust your first impression and work quickly.

+ intelligent	✓	2	3	4	5	dull	2
- naive	1	2	3	✓	5	sophisticated	1
+ knowledgeable	✓	2	3	4	5	ignorant	2
+ innovating	1	✓	3	4	5	imitative	1
+ original	1	✓	3	4	5	stereotype	1
- prosaic	1	2	3	✓	5	poetic	-1
- direct	1	2	✓	4	5	figurative	0
+ interesting	1	✓	3	4	5	boring	1
+ terse	1	2	3	4	✓	verbose	-2
+ enthusiastic	✓	2	3	4	5	indifferent	2
- hesitant	1	2	3	✓	5	confident	1
+ urgent	1	✓	3	4	5	nonchalant	1
- extravagant	1	2	3	✓	5	economical	1
+ sensitive	1	✓	3	4	5	insensitive	1
+ precise	1	✓	3	4	5	vague	1
- spurious	1	2	3	4	✓	authentic	2
Total							14

CHAPTER 4. The Semantic Differential. Part 2.

Qualitative interpretation of the results

1. CHILDREN WRITING A - G (Appendix A)

The following descriptive assessments have been made with reference to the overall response to each piece of writing. (Table of results C)

- A. Makes a favourable impression, although the writer is obviously a child, innocent in expression and prosaic in thought. The enthusiasm of the writer is particularly attractive, and shows valuable confidence and precision, used with intelligence.
- B. This piece shows more maturity than most, as well as a most satisfactory level of confidence in her resources, and the ability to respond to the situation both imaginatively and realistically.
- C. Not an inspiring result, with little to praise except the punch in its brief response which has a certain immediate appeal.
- D. Understandably the favourite, with an overall attraction that has transcended the intelligent use of the material in the introductory lesson; an overall positive response demonstrating that the appeal is of a general nature, and not dependent on any one quality much more than the others, adding the virtue of a consistent texture.
- E. This writer has the freedom of youth, and its freshness, but there is little else to commend. There are indications that when he becomes more fluent there is a sensitivity and an eye for detail that need more expertise to be expressed.
- F. Disappointing as far as literary achievement goes, simplicity to excess. There is also a lack of vigour which given a poor impression even if the accuracy is taken for granted. cf.G.
- G. Promotes a remarkably similar response to that given to F, although a more positive one. This writer shows an ability to handle language in the transactional mode with some skill, and is probably lacking in the experience of hearing and reading poetry.

CHAPTER 4. The Semantic Differential Part 2.

This kind of analysis, of the apparently trivial results of ordinary class lessons, should be carried out by class teachers in order to establish the points of reference from which they will make their judgements. Also, these analyses serve to separate the requirements of the poetic mode from the demands teachers must make for grammatical accuracy and neatness, and would serve to provide a basis for choosing the next curriculum development.

2. The assessors.

The following conclusions have been drawn with reference to the response of each assessor to each piece of writing, expressed as a summary of the five-point scale on which each pair of adjectives in the semantic differential was valued: very good +2, rather good +1, neither 0, rather bad -1, very bad -2 (Table of results: A) and with reference to the measure of agreement of the assessors with the consensus of opinion, and to what extent the assessors made a positive response to the semantic differential. Table of results: D)

Mabel: Fairly easy to please; a generous marker but generally in line with others.

Malcolm: Appreciative of D, but inclined to be very critical of the rest; tends to look for the genius and to neglect the others.

Mary: Classic result combined with a positive approach. Probably a discerning teacher who is helpful to all her pupils.

Matt: Like Mimi, expresses a like for G, but does not depart far from the norm otherwise; can be discouraging.

Maurice: Inclined to be kind to all pupils, but does not detect faults.

Max: Favours B, generally accepted as the most mature effort, and is irritated by E which was generally regarded as simplistic.

Melanie: Extraordinary response to quality of D, but B appreciated.

CHAPTER 4. The Semantic Differential Part 2.

Qualitative interpretation.

Mick: Usually negative reactions; not far from the mainstream of comparison, but probably not encouraging to diffident writers.

Milly: A very divergent view; what happens in this teacher's class?

Mimi: G has made some kind of individual appeal to this assessor, although generally the rank order is normal for the group. This should be re-assessed by the teacher concerned to try to isolate the relevant attractive quality. It could be valid indication of merit not receiving attention in the differential.

Molly: More support for generally accepted evaluation.

Mona: This assessment used 'neither' excessively, and was presumably unable to apply the given adjectives to children's writing. There was no comment to this effect on the forms, but some teachers did say that they found the whole exercise difficult.

Muriel: Also inclined to be negative; very little discernment can be expressed if the assessment does not use several pairs of adjectives.

It is interesting to note that, except in the case of Melanie, a high correlation co-efficient coincides with a positive approach to the children's writing in general. This may indicate that a certain amount of sympathy with the exercise of creative writing is necessary for a discerning appreciation of their efforts, which is not always forthcoming. On the other hand it is alarming to find enthusiasm misdirected, as may be the case in Melanie's class.

Assessment of creative writing extends the personal relationship between tutor and pupil, and so each individual variation from the norm is very important in the classroom. Even if the teacher's assessment correlates statistically, and the teacher shows his ability to be acceptably discerning, each child must have, as well, some useful appreciation

CHAPTER 4. The Semantic Differential Part 2.

at his own level. Teachers of juniors tend, by using gimmicks and a very limited range of examples, to develop styles which override individual temperaments. It is discrimination we require, not merely agreement.

These assessments of the assessors are crude, and serve to make the point that such marking exercises as these tell us more about the assessors than the assessed. Also, the validity of such judgements is questionable when one considers that the teachers were taking part in an in-service course where their behaviour might well be different from that in the classroom.

The exercise was undertaken by twenty teachers, of whom thirteen completed all seven sheets. They were allowed to be anonymous, and no one added comments on the sheets. Seven teachers did not complete the assessments because there was insufficient time, although they continued to make an attempt to do so during the discussion period. However, in the limited time available for discussion it became clear that there was a vociferous group who maintained that it was impossible to assess a piece of creative writing in isolation from the child and a knowledge of his relationships and general ability. The pilot study indicated that more information about the way in which the children's writing was produced does not necessarily lead to a greater measure of agreement about its merit, but this was not at issue. What these subjects wanted was knowledge of the child. They say no necessity for the assessment of children's writing against absolute standards, or that the assessment should be made by people who could write creatively themselves. It would have been most interesting to have been able to ask these assessors to rank the poems written by adults used in the pilot study, but circumstances did not allow time for this to be done. The whole question of the standpoint from which teachers make their assessments has not been explored, except in so far as it arises in the personal statements (Chapter 7). This is

CHAPTER 4. The Semantic Differential Part 2.

discussed in Chapter 9.

CHAPTER 5. Focused holistic scoring Part 1

General description of method.

Greenhalgh and Townsend describe the assessment of an assignment given to ten year olds. They were asked to write an account of how to construct a swing, helped by a picture of some possible materials and tools.

'Focused holistic scoring is 'holistic' because it considers the total piece of writing; it is 'focused' because it evaluates writing in terms of pre-defined criteria, thus making it a criterion-referenced procedure. General criteria used in focused holistic scoring are outlined before an exercise is developed; these criteria are then defined more specifically after the item has been tried out with a small group of students. The criteria comprise a set of score points ranging from 0-4, and they are presented in a scoring guide that accompanies each item.'

(Greenhalgh and Townsend, p.812)

Reasons for choosing this method.

This seems to offer certain advantages which would develop the experience gained already from using the semantic differential and from teachers' personal statements. These advantages are:

- (i) It should be possible to define expectations so that the source of credit (or criticism) given to young writers is specific to the task. The extent of the agreement within a group of teachers about the quality of such writing should indicate from which features the agreement arose. Where in fact, the most worthy expressions of literary talent being given most credit? Ranking, even using the semantic differential, does not encourage the detailed review of expectations.
- (ii) The actual marking process involves (a) reading (b) awarding a grade. This is not physically demanding and consequently probably a more

CHAPTER 5. Focused holistic scoring Part 1

viable procedure to offer to busy teachers for their use.

(iii) Although the expression of the different criteria would be open to (and would no doubt receive) criticism by teachers who were asked to use them, this criticism in itself could be enlightening as to the expectations arising and being used in classrooms.

'The use of focused holistic scoring on a regular basis as a response to student writing can help call the attention of both students and teachers to the more important consideration of content rather than the surface features of a piece of writing.'

(ibid. p.822)

(iv) 'it would be inappropriate to penalize students for something that is a natural part of their development'

(ibid. p.814)

Thus punctuation, handwriting and spelling are clearly placed in a subordinate position for this exercise.

(v) There would be, for this scoring, definite indications of the kind of help needed by pupils to improve their creative writing.

The pilot study to determine criteria that can be used for a set of written work.

The starting point

A picture was used because:

(i) This particular poster illustration has a general appeal to boys and girls

(ii) It minimizes the problem of isolating the amount of help given by the teacher; while one would not, normally, be considered to be teaching unless prompting writing by discussion as well as by a vital stimulus, the

CHAPTER 5. Focused holistic scoring Part 1

preliminaries to writing prompted by a picture can to some extent be standardized so that the approach to different classes is the same.

(ii) It would be possible to pursue this idea using a picture reproduced so that each child had his own copy, which would increase the likelihood of an individual response.

(iv) The criteria could be applied to a considerable age range and number of pupils' responses.

The picture used was 'The Gift' attributed to Jimmy Canty (1978) reproduced by Anthenna International. It depicts a fantastic landscape including rockets, ruins, spacemen, witches and a dragon. The style is reminiscent of the pre-Raphaelites, the colour predominantly green and grey.

The children were asked to look at the picture in groups, and then to write about it. 'Try to imagine what is happening, or what is going to happen. You may be involved yourself'. The second year junior class who wrote for the pilot study write poems for their class teacher, and were encouraged to do so on this occasion. They were helped with spelling if they asked for it, but most of them preferred to carry on without interruption. Examples of their writing used to establish the descriptions of the score points may be found in Appendix D.

Establishing the criteria for the score points.

'Criteria was in focused holistic scoring are derived from four sources.'
(Ibid. p.812).

The headings below are taken from Greenhalgh and Townsend (1981) and applied to the task given to the children in this pilot study.

Source 1 Major rhetorical demands.

AUDIENCE: The children were writing for their head teacher and would

CHAPTER 5. Focused holistic scoring Part 1.

expect their best work to be read out, or displayed in a fair copy, according to usual classroom practice. There was no specification of audience, which Greenhalgh and Townsend admit may cause confusion in younger pupils.

PURPOSE: The could be PERSUASIVE in eliciting the atmosphere - weird fantastic.

They could be INFORMATIVE in describing some features seen, and reactions to them.

The could be EXPRESSIVE in making comparisons, perceiving contrasts, responding emotionally, inventing repercussions, 'connect (ing) details to express ideas or feelings'.

The dominant purpose was in this case expressive.

MODE: NARRATIVE - some children wrote about events in chronological order.

DESCRIPTIVE - this could be of the picture itself, or of the feelings it aroused. This was the dominant 'mode' to which the children were 'cued'.

CLASSIFICATION - the most telling similes and metaphors classify in an unexpected and unusual way: the cliché, although classifying information correctly, is undesirable in this context.

Source 2 Specific rhetorical demands.

The most important 'verbal and visual clues' are

the strangeness of the landscape
oddities in its inhabitants
heterogeneous nature of conventions used
e.g. pre-Raphaelite dragons,
dragons and comic spacemen,
weird colouring, grey-green prevailing.

Source 3 Developmental capabilities of students

'Writers are not penalized for writing in those ways that are appropriate for their ages and developmental levels, because the scoring guide attempts

CHAPTER 5. Focused holistic scoring Part 1

to reflect the emerging capabilities of young children as they learn to write the language.' (Ibid p.813).

This should make this method of assessment particularly acceptable to those teachers who place great emphasis on the quality of the writer's personal response.

Source 4 Demands upon grammatical expertise, spelling

'The more children's writing is constrained by demands of the evaluative procedures, the more accepting scoring criteria should be of errors attributable to that situation, such as errors in spelling or omissions of words.' (Ibid. p.814)

Descriptions of Score Points

- 0 'These papers are not scoreable because they are blank or fail in other ways to respond to the assignment' (Ibid,p.816)

There were no results which fell into this category.

1. 'Papers which attempt to address the topic but do so in a manner that does not demonstrate success with the task'.

Response to the picture is marginal and includes:

- (a) a story which mentions a strange planet, but no detail which can be identified in the picture is mentioned.
 - (b) a list of objects in the picture, named but not described or connected imaginatively.
 - (c) there is evidence from single words that the picture has been seen, but the syntax is too confused to constitute to coherent response.
2. Papers that respond to the task in a 'skeletal' or inconsistent way.
- (a) items in the picture are named with minimal description of appearance or juxtaposition
 - (b) most of the comment is extraneous, or a narrative begun which relates to one feature of the picture isolated from the rest.
 - (c) no emotional response at all, no preferences indicated.
3. Papers which show an effective response that brings part or whole of the picture to mind, visually, and involves some personal reaction
- (a) specific detail seen in the picture.
 - (b) primitive attempt to isolate abnormalities
 - (c) interaction between items in the picture imagined but not developed
 - (d) vocabulary is ordinary and used prosaically
 - (e) rhyming, if attempted, at war with sense and general purpose.

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4. Papers at this level are more elaborate in description and reaction, and more organized in thought and structure.
- (a) evidence of a noticing eye for shape and colour
 - (b) comparing and contrasting in order to describe in an inventive way.
 - (c) successful evocation of the alien atmosphere, by description of the picture or by describing personal response; exploration of the landscape in the writer's imagination.
 - (d) organization of phrases into rhythmic units; rhyme, if used, an asset
 - (e) adventurous or more mature vocabulary.

Comments on results

Sample papers: Greenhalgh and Townsend reproduce their sample papers as written by the children, but in this pilot study type-written copies were used which reproduce the original syntax and spelling, but avoid the handwriting issue. They may be found in Appendix D.

Classification: 17 scripts were evaluated. It was interesting to find that one's gut reaction to the first reading of a child's work was supported by a more reasoned and detailed study.

One of the points holistic scoring makes very well is that in dealing with the writing of younger children (not secondary) it may be impossible to construct more than five categories out of the results of any one exercise, because sensitivity, maturity and skill do not develop hand in hand. A high score representing skill may not correspond with high sensitivity. Also, in any one class, although the best may be very much better than the worst, in the grey area between lies most of their writing.

Greenhalgh and Townsend recognize the difference between a test and a lesson. Their study was concerned with communicating instructions, which could be defined relatively clearly, but there still appears this conflict

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between the desire of teachers to help their pupils at the moment when they need help, and are therefore more likely to remember what to do next time, and the desire to assess performance in which the contribution of the teacher must be discounted. If the pupil is accustomed to received help on demand, which most teachers in junior schools do supply, their unaided efforts will contain errors in their written English which do not detract from their ability to communicate.

It was found to be, with this particular batch of scripts, fairly easy to find score points that fitted them. There were three attempts at Score point 1, and several at Score point 2 of which five were chosen which show all the features. If they are compared with those in the group representing Score point 3 it is possible to distinguish between 'minimal' response, and 'effective responde' e.g. Score point 2, Timothy: 'A little dragon --- a little mans head --- a little hill'.

Score point 3, Kevin: The bragn loked like it had ros from heaven!

(The dragon looked like it had risen from heaven).

The latter lacks skill in syntax and spelling but does attempt to 'isolate abnormality' and to imagine some 'interaction' between the dragon and the spacemen and robots, and the rocks, which he feels to be in the nature of retribution, winged and all-powerful.

Only three scripts had sufficient evidence of the features described in Score point 4.

4 (a) 'the colour of slime in a pond' (Anthony)

4 (b) 'a snaky dragon/ Points his head as if he's
goind to bite the sky' (Karl)

4 (c) Sally uses 'rhythmic units' in an obvious pattern.

All three have an ear for cadences.

4 (e) 'delicate bridge' (Sally)

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It is necessary to make some allowance for the age of the children (second year juniors) in interpreting what is 'mature' vocabulary, and it may be difficult to ignore Kevin's spelling in an older child.

The children were not told about the Score points, but when returning their scripts to them afterwards it was possible to make more perceptive comments on their work, and share with all the children the discovery of which details made the writing pleasing and exciting.

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

An experiment in the application of focused holistic scoring by 16 primary school teachers to 12 pieces of written work by 10 - 11 year old children.

How the writing was achieved.

The children were fourth year juniors in a class of 32 pupils at Tarporley C.E. Primary School. They were asked to respond to a picture, which was used in Part 1, an Athena International poster 'The Gift' attributed to Jimmy Canty (1978). They had seen the picture before, because it was hung on the wall in the headteacher's office towards the end of the spring term until the holidays, but the artist and the title remained anonymous. There is always a picture or chart of visual interest in that position, and children visiting the office usually make their own comments. Occasionally this results in the gift of poem without further prompting.

This particular class was very happy to write freely for their class teacher and the headteacher, and has produced for the latter various kinds of writing (e.g. cloze exercises, stories, statements of opinion) during the year. They were asked to imagine that they were inside the picture, and to write about their sensations and what was happening. As the exercise was carried out with a view to presenting the results to other teachers for assessment, no attempt was made to promote discussion or exchange vocabulary. This would normally be an important part of exploiting the learning situation, but it presents difficulties to the assessor who is unaware of the extent to which prompting has heightened the children's perception and supplemented their pre-knowledge. A teacher's support is essential if children are to make progress in achievement and gain confidence in their ability to express personal responses, and teachers can be aware of the extent to which their pupils'

success is due to direct intervention when teachers are evaluating their pupils' results themselves.

The choice of a visual stimulus facilitates the presentation of the writing to other teachers in a way in which they can have a reasonable comprehension of the experience the children shared immediately before writing. It was made knowing that there can be 'notions of acceptable response' (Creber, p.42 1981) which prevent any stimulus deliberately brought into the classroom from being listened to or looked at for its own sake; but it was the first time these children had been asked to respond to a picture only.

Twelve scripts were chosen which showed different approaches. They were typewritten to avoid prejudice against unattractive handwriting, and the spelling was corrected although it was, on the whole, better than average. No child failed to respond, but some were very brief or confused; these were not represented to reduce the bulk of manuscript. Where a child had deliberately chosen some kind of pattern or format for his writing this was preserved, and no arrangement was imposed on those efforts that were in prose. Punctuation was not altered.

Circumstances with prevail against the use of focused holistic scoring.

The procedure was, in the first, instance, seen as a way in which an individual teacher could think analytically and constructively about the writing produced by pupils in response to individual teaching, as was attempted in Part 1. Once assessment is engineered to admit the application of these score points by other teachers, the elements of a testing situation are introduced which are not conducive to the development of the child's quality of expression as a response to the whole learning situation. The child's response is to be examined in a situation that can be described to others. Also, the children are unknown quantities to the assessors, whose impersonal judgement has a value in promoting good standards of appreciation, but cannot form a part of the dialogue between pupil and teacher which is an intrinsic part of developing maturity in style and content. Many of the teachers taking part in this experiment and others of the same kind (cf. semantic differential exercise, Chapter 4, p) expressed difficulty in evaluating anonymous scripts, indicating that although they must be given credit for realising the importance of the encouragement they give to children with whom they are involved personally, and their readiness to assume responsibility for accepting with praise the best effort afforded by any child, there is a danger in this reluctance. Teachers as an audience must have respectable standards of excellence implicit in their response, however sensitively they are made explicit.

In defining their expectations, teachers will have in mind results concomitant with good practice. An attempt made to provide material from another class in the same age group to whom the visiting teacher was a stranger, produced very little writing which could be commended outside that classroom. There was enthusiasm and application, a desire

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

to be convinced that what they wrote was pleasing and was poetry, but several regular sessions would have been needed to provide the shared experiences, listening and discussion, which create the common fund of words and strategies which children need to interpret their perceptions with any degree of maturity. In the same way, the use of focused holistic scoring in infant classes could not, and should not, demand the demonstration of linguistic skills or social awareness outside their domain.

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

Procedure.

The teachers taking part were attending the last session of four constituting a Cheshire Education Committee in-service course: 21/83 Language Workshop for Teachers in Primary Schools, October 1982. During the evening other events necessitated a fairly strict time-table, and two people made note of their inability to complete the task to their satisfaction. 16 of the 20 teachers present made sufficient annotations to the scripts for them to be useful, but there was no written comment on the work submitted by 3 out of the 12 children. It was suggested that comments should be made as if the written work was to be returned to the child.

Each teacher was supplied with copies of the children's writing, and a description of the score points, which were those designated in Part 1 (Appendix B). The tutor gave a brief resume of the purpose of this research and the origins of the material. The poster was on display and had been so on the previous session. It was made clear that if score points in the third category were found to be applicable, they could be subsumed by score point 4. The scores and comments were written on the papers.

Points made in discussion between course members.

- (i) This kind of evaluation would take too long to operate frequently; perhaps once a term, considering that a set of score points could be used on more than one occasion. There was unanimous agreement that the oral or written comment made for the individual child must take precedence in time and effort.
- (ii) The language used in defining the score points was too erudite, particularly 3 (c) 'interaction between items in the picture imagined but not developed'. It was possible to explain this to everyone's satisfaction,

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by using examples. The validity of this item was confirmed by the written comments of the assessors, who were prone to demand this type of development. e.g. 'I should like to hear the wizard's conversation'. Imagination is required from teacher and child to explore all the possibilities.

(iii) The children had made a very rewarding response, and it was observed that this is not always the case. There was considerable interest shown in how a curriculum can be provided which fosters writing of this quality, and how to motivate children who are under-achieving. These matters were of primary concern to course members. They did not readily connect their own perceptions of the weird landscape, or any other starting point, with successfully involving pupils. The overriding concern was with the accurate articulation of the commonplace. There was some doubt as to the value of spending time evaluating good work, other than a word of praise.

(iv) The value of appraisal from a positive standpoint was appreciated. Only score point 2 (c) is completely negative.

(v) There was unanimous agreement that the work of junior school children would be unlikely to require more than five score points.

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

Focused holistic scoring applied to writing about a poster.

Descriptions of score points referred to in Table 10.

- 0 These papers are not scoreable because they are blank or fail in other ways to respond to the assignment.
- 1. Papers which attempt to address the topic but do so in a manner that does not demonstrate success with the task.
 - (a) a story which mentions a strange planet, but no detail which can be identified in the picture is mentioned.
 - (b) a list of objects in the picture, named but not described or connected imaginatively.
 - (c) there is evidence from single words that the picture has been seen, but the syntax is too confused to constitute a coherent response.
- 2. Papers that respond to the task in a 'skeletal' or inconsistent way.
 - (a) items in the picture are named with minimal description of appearance or juxtaposition.
 - (b) most of the comment is extraneous, or a narrative begun which relates to one feature of the picture isolated from the rest.
 - (c) no emotional response at all, no preference indicated.
- 3. Papers which show an effective response that brings a part or whole of the picture to mind, visually, and involves personal reaction.
 - (a) specific detail seen in the picture
 - (b) primitive attempt to isolate abnormalities
 - (c) interaction between items in the picture imagined but not developed
 - (d) vocabulary is ordinary and used prosaically
 - (e) rhyming, if attempted, at war with sense and general purpose.
- 4. Papers at this level are more elaborate in description and reaction and more organized in thought and structure.
 - (a) evidence of a noticing eye for shape and colour.
 - (b) comparing and contrasting in order to describe in an inventive way.

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- (c) successful evocation of the alien atmosphere, by description of the picture or describing personal response; exploration of the landscape in the writer's imagination.
- (d) organization or phrases into rhythmic units; rhyme, if used, an asset.
- (e) adventurous or more mature vocabulary

Focused holistic scoring Part 2. TABLE 10
 Results application of score points The score points are described on the previous
 * indicates this score point designated by one teacher. page to the written work of twelve children by sixteen teachers.

	2(a)	2(b)	2(c)	3(a)	3(b)	3(c)	3(d)	3(e)	4(a)	4(b)	4(c)	4(d)	4(e)
ALAN	*** ***	*** ***	*** ***	*** ***	*	*	**		*	*			
AMANDA	*			***	*** ***	*** ***			***	*	*** ***	*** ***	**
ANDREW									**	**	**	***	***
CLAIRE				*** ***	*** ***	**	**	*			*		
DANIEL				***	***	***	***	***	**	*	*	*	*
DAVID			*	*** *** ***	*	**	*	*	*** *** ***	*** ***	*** ***	***	***
HELEN				*	*	*	***	*	*		*		
IAN	**	**	**	*									
JULIA				**	*						***	***	*
LEIGH				***		**	*		*	*	*	*	*
MARK	***	*	*										
SIMON				**					*	**	*** ***	**	***

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

Comments written on the scripts with children in Mind.

The score points from the Table 10 are printed above comments

ALAN. 2(a)***** 2(b) **** 2(c) ***** 3(a) 3(b) * 3(c) * 3(e) -
4(b) *

- (i) It sound a gruesome place, Alan. Would you like to stay there for a long time?
- (ii) Write about what you feel, rather than just what you saw.
- (iii) This is quite a good description of the picture, but you must try to use your imagination a little more. 'Why is the rocket here?' for example.
- (iv) How did you feel when you saw the U.F.O? Try and write more about this.
- (v) Who were 'they'?
- (vi) This reminds me of a nightmare. I shared it with you.
- (vii) A good try Alan. I like your description of the U.F.O. in verse two. I would like to have read more about the shark.

AMANDA. 2(a) * 3(a) *** 3(b) ***** 3(c) ***** 4(a) *** 4(b) * 4(c) *****
4(d) ***** 4(e) **

- ✓ (i) Very good. You have thought yourself into the picture.
- (ii) I like the choice of words: 'I strain to open my eyes'.
- (iii) Where does the bright light come from I wonder?
- (iv) I enjoyed this - especially the mention of the dragon.
- (v) This is a very good attempt. You have tried to go a little further than just describing the picture.
- (vi) Good use of vocabulary (5 words starred). Some interesting rhymes.
- (vii) I do hope that you managed to escape.
- (viii) I like your title, Amanda. Interesting ideas. Come and have a chat about your rhyming.

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

- (ix) I like this poem - you have described the scene well, especially
1 and 3. Well done!

ANDREW. 4(a) ** 4(b) ** 4(c) ** 4(d) *** 4(c) ****

- (i) This is a really good attempt. You have written a poem full of
description. Most interesting to read.
(ii) I'm glad that I was not with you. I'm afraid of ghosts! Well
done.
(iii) A very good effort.

CLAIRE. 3(a) **** 3(b) **** 3(c) ** 3(d) ** 3(e) * 4(c) *

- (i) Could you have told us about what you say in the poster.

DAVID 2(c) * 3(a) ***** 3(b) * 3(c) ** 3(d) * 3(e) * 4(a) *****
4(b) ***** 4(c) ***** 4(d) *** 4(c) ***

- (i) A good descriptive piece of work. I enjoyed reading this.
(ii) This is a super poem. I like your use of adjectives. It makes
me feel really eerie as if I am in the place myself. Good work.
(iii) Good use of adjectives. David. A vivid description.
(iv) I feel you have captured the atmosphere splendidly. Well done!
(vi) Where are you? I should like to hear the wizard's conversation.
(vii) What do you think they ('men') are looking for? I particularly
enjoyed your description of the waterfall.

HELEN. 3(a) * 3(b) * 3(c) * 3(d) *** 3(c) * 4(a) * 4(c) *

- (i) A good description, Helen. You have developed your ideas well.
(ii) What sort of bribe is the space woman using?
(iii) Quite good, but I am sure that you could use your imagination
much more than this.
(iv) This is a good story, really enjoyable to read.

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

JULIA 3(a) ** 3(b) * 4(d) ***** 4(e) *

- (i) This is an imaginative poem with some lovely rhyming phrases.
- (ii) You make me feel I am there.
- (iii) It's interesting that you found the picture beautiful, Julia.
- (iv) Good, but could you have used some more descriptive words?

LEIGH 3(a) **** 3(c) ** 3(d) * 4(a) * 4(b) * 4(c) * 4(d) * 4(e) *

- (i) Good but perhaps you could use some action words to make this move faster.
- (ii) This is quite a good poem and describes what you have seen in the picture. However, perhaps you could have imagined a little more. What are they here for? When will they go?
- (iii) Gives a very clear description of the picture.

SIMON 3(a) ** 4(a) * 4(c) ***** 4(d) ** 4(e) ***

- (i) I would feel frightened too - would you stay?
 - (ii) It doesn't sound like earth.
 - (iii) A beautiful, thoughtful poem with some lovely phrases and words.
 - (iv) I really feel you have stepped into the picture. Well done.
 - (v) How exciting! Whatever is going to happen next?
 - (vi) Well done, Simon. You express your fear well.
 - (vii) You ask some interesting questions here Simon.
 - (viii) This is really good. It is full of really descriptive adjectives.
- When I read your poem I feel as if I am there myself.

Two assessors used ticks as well as comments.

Twelve made comments but not on every paper to which they give score points.

Three papers had no written comment, only score points.

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

Comments on teachers' written responses to children's writing.

Some appreciative comments focus on special features, indicating where merit lies.

ALAN. This reminds me of a nightmare. I shared it with you. I like your description of the U.F.O. in verse two.

AMANDA You have thought yourself into the picture. I like the choice of words. 'I strain to open my eyes'.

I enjoyed this, especially the mention of the dragon.

Good use of vocabulary (5 words starred). Some interesting rhymes.

I like your title, Amanda.

You have described the scene especially well in verses 1 and 3.

DAVID A good descriptive piece of work.

I like your use of adjectives.

Good use of adjectives. Dávid.

--- some lovely phrases and words.

I particularly enjoyed your description of the waterfall.

SIMON --- some lovely phrases and words.

You express your fear well.

You ask some interesting questions here, Simon.

It is full of really descriptive adjectives.

HELEN. A good description, Helen.

JULIA --- some lovely rhyming phrases.

LEIGH --- describes what you have seen in the picture.

Gives a very clear description of the picture.

ANDREW --- a poem full of description

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

Comments on teachers' written responses to children's writing.

(ii) Some comments express dissatisfaction, focus on certain features or omissions, indicating how the work could be improved or extended.

ALAN Would you like to stay there for a long time?
Write about what you feel, rather than just what you saw.
--- you must try to use your imagination a little more,
'Why is the rocket here?' for example.
How did you feel when you saw the U.F.O.? Try and write more about this.
Who were they?
I would like to have read more about the share.

AMANDA Where does the bright light come from, I wonder?
I do hope that you managed to escape.

DAVID Where are you? I should like to hear the wizard's conversation.
What do you think they (Men) are looking for?

SIMON --- would you stay?
It doesn't sound like earth.
Whatever is going to happen next?

HELEN What sort of bribe is the space woman using?
--- I am sure you could use your imagination much more than this.

JULIA --- could you have used some more descriptive words?

LEIGH --- perhaps you could have imagined a little more.
What are they here for? Will they go?

CLAIRE Could you have told us more about what you saw in the poster.

(iii) Some comments show appreciation of the child's ability to share experience.

ALAN. This reminds me of a nightmare. I shared it with you.

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

Comments on teachers' written responses to children's writing.

AMANDA You have thought yourself into the picture.

DAVID It makes me feel really eerie as if I am in the place myself.

I feel you have captured the atmosphere splendidly.

SIMON A beautiful thoughtful poem.

I really feel you have stepped into the picture.

When I read your poem I feel as if I am there myself.

HELEN This is a good story, really enjoyable to read.

JULIA You make me feel I am there.

ANDREW I'm glad that I was not with you. I'm afraid of ghosts!

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

A comparison of the score points with the teachers' written comments.

The outstanding feature of the teacher's comments is the importance afforded to description by using adjectives, without any indication of which adjectives. There is a general impression that they produce their effect rather like icing on a cake, and that quantity is more important than texture and design. In two instances a 'choice of words' and 'use of vocabulary' are commended and Amanda is told exactly which words are meant, which must be a more positive directive towards success in her next piece of writing. Generally though, praise is bland. There seems to be no conception of the way in which a poet can use verbs and nouns evocatively.

Now the score points do mention description, but in conjunction with 'reaction', 'emotional response', 'personal response', and 'exploration' and describing 'in an inventive way'. An attempt has been made in distinguishing between Score points 3 and 4 to help teachers search for evidence of development from a simple response to a more complex one, and it should be possible to see with the help of these categories why David's poem scored more highly than Amanda's or Simon's. All these prompted the assessors to comment on their ability to share their imagined experience most vividly (4c). Their range of vocabulary is very similar, as far as one can judge in a short piece (4c). Amanda has a light edge in her ability to give form to her writing (4d) but all three consciously arrange phrases. The crux of the matter seems to be in David's superior inventiveness (4b) and 'noticing eye' (4a). Is this not so? Or is this merely the instinctive reaction to give credit for the most adjectives? Consider these phrases from Amanda's poem:

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

A comparison of the score points with the teachers' written comments.

'I strain to open my eyes
A giant metal object lies
Against the solid pillow
A dragon seems to be their pet,
And the water is under control.

One teacher only found the first line worthy of comment. The other two phrases underlined were ignored. They are remarkable in the way they convey the sense of secret purpose underlying the apparent chaos in the picture: purposes like those imagined in Helen's story, and Leigh's use of 'garden' in her title.

We cannot predict achievements like this before we come to look at the children's ideas. We may not, ourselves, be capable of finding such expressions. But we should be able to recognise their pith and economy alongside David's extravagant 'enormous, hissing, spitting dragon' and 'great, bat-like sharp wings'.

Those teachers who made suggestions for further development were commenting in a way which might have been valuable to the children in the classroom at the time of writing, which they were not in a position to do, although some are not helpful. It is difficult to understand how Helen for instance, can be accused of not using her imagination 'much more' without some explanation. In this case, the onus would seem to be upon the teacher to provide her with further experience of poetic statements which explore evocation and contrast: and more, and very varied, opportunities to make her personal statements about reality as well as fantasy.

The suggestions are important because they show what some teachers expected. The common demand for 'feeling' from Alan (2c) (no emotional

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

response) correctly diagnoses his preoccupation with the excitement he equates with 'blood and thunder' adventure stories, where no terror is traumatic and the rules are those of the comic strip and cartoons. He needs to hear how literature can be no larger than life, and equally exciting, and become involved in reading it himself. In the meantime, 'This reminds me of a nightmare' amply sums up a recognition of his achievement and the teacher's awareness of Alan's limitations.

One might complain that it is the teachers themselves who, in comments in the first and second categories, show a lack of emotional response. The comments in the third category show the child that his audience has understood, and sympathised, even been carried away. This, surely, is the mark of artistic success for which any author writes, and which no score point can replace.

Indications for future evaluation.

There are serious doubts that there is sufficient time in the primary teachers' normal day at school to attend to the detailed examination of children's writing in this way on a day-to-day or even on a weekly basis, even if a teacher with extra responsibility provided the score points. But is equally certain the involvement in this exercise promoted constructive criticism which is generally absent from the impression marking which is not always paramount in its chief virtue; this is, that the teacher does not condemn.

So much still depends on the ability of the teacher to interpret the generalised demands of the score points, which will in turn depend upon his own literary experience and poetic sensibility. The designation of score points in this manner can make a foundation for, but cannot supercede, the contact of teacher with child and their conversation about what has been written.

Many teachers, probably the majority, are primarily concerned to give their children, and preferably share with them, opportunities to write poetry which sustain the motivation to do so. This precious attitude is fostered as an end in itself, and obscures the promotion of excellence about a certain mediocre level. But it is in evaluating this excellence that features of growth in perception, and the skill to use words poetically, are recognised by teachers and made available to children.

The analysis has the advantage of a departure from the order of merit in which the weighting of credit is unspecified. Table 10 (p.87). showing how the score points were awarded reflects the imbalance of subjective judgements, but it also shows in which areas there is general agreement or disagreement. Literary appreciation cannot be conducted like an election, as the comparison between comment and scoring was able

CHAPTER 6. Focused holistic scoring Part 2.

to demonstrate. We must do whatever we can to make our judgements informed, honest, and responsible, and then put them to work in the classroom.

'There are, of course, no substitutes for the teacher's vision and his capacity to live a full life.'

(Vernon Hale in Rogers, 1970,p.146).

In the course of testing out the feasibility of using the semantic differential and focused holistic scoring as means of assessing junior children's creative writing, several teachers found that this kind of impersonal judgement was foreign to their usual classroom practice. While appreciating that it would be helpful to teacher and pupil if a more objective way of realising what the children had achieved could be found, they had a deeply rooted instinct to temper their overt judgements to the emotional needs of the child concerned. Any other kind of judgement seemed, to some of them, to be unnecessary. It was important to explore what was happening in classrooms, and since the judgement of the literary critic is necessarily subjective to some degree it was important to find out how assessment was taking place, and the prevailing quality of acceptable writing.

The contributors.

Joan Bulmer	Middle School
Michael Carruthers	Primary School, Deputy headteacher.
Richard Evans	Secondary School
Sheila Jones	Infant School, Scale 2. (Mathematics)
Gaynor Kitchener	Infant School, Headteacher
Sheila Parry	Middle School, Scale 2 (English)
Irene Rawnsley	Middle School, Head of Year
Judith Sharman	Infant School, on secondment
Frank Skitt	Primary School, Headteacher (retired)

These teachers do (or did) include creative activities in the writing of the children they teach, and they were asked to reply to a letter (overleaf). They were chosen because they were likely to have something to say in reply, because of their known and declared interest in encouraging children to write poetically, and because they were not

CHAPTER 7. Personal Statements Part 1.

involved in any previous exercises described in this study. They present a composite of experience in teaching young children, over a period of at least ten years in each case. No other teachers were approached. Four people responded promptly and confidently, but the other five confessed that, although enthusiastically supporting the value judgement implicit in the letter (i.e. that creative writing in school is a good idea), they found it difficult to write their answer, and took time to complete their answers to their own satisfaction. No one asked to remain anonymous, confirming their personal involvement which is a necessary adjunct to giving direct evidence on an emotive topic.

Tarporley CE School,
Park Road
Tarporley CW6 0AN

February 1982.

Dear

You may know that I am engaged in a modest investigation into the assessment of written English in the creative mode. I should be very grateful if you would write down, and allow me to quote in my study, a brief statement of your own attitude and experience in this area. I had in mind something of about 400-500 words, but more or less will be equally welcome.

Please do not feel obliged to answer my questions directly, but I will pose some as guidelines towards the kind of examples I wish to collect.

Why do we ask children to write imaginatively/poetically/
creatively?

What kind of results do we expect?

What do we do with the children's writing? (correction,
appreciation, development)

Is it possible/necessary to assess creative writing?

Has practice and experience changed your method of marking?

How does one creative writing session affect your approach to
the next session with the same group?

I should appreciate your guidance as to how I should acknowledge your view, by name and/or professional status, e.g. I could be 'D.Cowley, Primary Headteacher' or 'An OU Graduate'. I enclose a S.A.E. for your reply, which I look forward to receiving in the near future.

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Thank you, and best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Daphne Cowley.

CHAPTER 7. Personal statements Part 1.

Analysis of the statements

Quotations from the statements are grouped together to show areas of agreement and areas of concern. They are acknowledged by the initials of the contributor, and the full statements may be found in Appendix C. Groups of quotations are collected here under six general headings.

1. ASSESSMENT - ACHIEVEMENT.
2. ASSESSMENT - EXPECTATIONS.
3. ASSESSMENT - CORRECTION-CRITICISM-COMMENT.
4. ASSESSMENT - ERROR
5. ASSESSMENT - PRAISE -PREFERENCE.
6. PERSONAL - INDIVIDUAL.
7. IDIOSYNCRATIC.

As assessment of some kind, in the broadest sense, was acceptable and desirable to the teachers concerned.

1. ASSESSMENT - ACHIEVEMENT

G.K. 'The creative process --- (is) more important than the result'.

G.K. 'It is possible to assess creative writing. A spontaneous --- assessment is made when the work is read.'

S.P. 'It is possible to assess subjectively --- I consider this by far the most valuable form of assessment'.

S.J. 'I think it is very possible and vitally necessary to assess creative writing.'

R.E. 'It is necessary to make some form of evaluation about how the pupils are developing their writing.'

I.R. 'assessment is necessary, only if the general style of teaching in the school directs it.'

There was general agreement about classroom practice, e.g. use of rough

CHAPTER 7. Personal statements Part 1.

drafts, display areas, authentic stimuli, sympathetic teacher, willing pupil, and all these form part of the climate in which creative work is received. There was also general agreement about the way in which the evaluation, at any level, should be conveyed to the child.

Two features predominate.

- (1) a concern for individual attention over and above the normal requirements of mixed ability classes.
- (ii) a concern to be encouraging, to praise.

2. ASSESSMENT - EXPECTATIONS.

J.B. 'I temper my correction of mistakes according to my knowledge of the individual child.'

G.K. 'comments (are) made in the light of previous work.'

G.K. 'The child may be asked --- what he thinks of it'.

M.C. 'a teacher should try to assess a piece of work as being good or bad for each child.'

S.P. 'we should accept any genuine written offering.'

M.C. 'I expect (results) geared to intelligence and reading ability.'

I.R. 'At first one tends to have low expectations.'

R.E. '(it is) important not to set up negative feelings of failure.'

R.E. 'even the worst kind of writing has some good points.'

F.S. 'using the demands I did make more as occasions of significance --- than as occasions for judgement on them.'

F.S. 'to change the emphasis, stop making it a matter of judgement.'

J.B. 'I think children should be helped to look critically at their own work.'

J.B. 'the emphasis should be on stressing the good.'

J.S. 'Does it achieve what the child set out to achieve?'

This last question introduces another dimension which is not clearly

defined, but it serves as a reminder that our assessment may be based on very different expectations from those of our pupils. His most satisfying achievement may be to please his teacher. How easily is 'Sir' pleased?

The aura of approval is usually maintained by some kind of written comment, sometimes by conversation.

3. ASSESSMENT - CORRECTION - CRITICISM - COMMENT.

S.P. 'I often marked creative work by giving it a score, but now prefer to comment on it'.

I.R. 'I dislike grading a good story.'

G.K. 'I have never given language work marks out of ten'

S.J. 'My comment --- starts with a compliment.'

F.S. 'I began to reduce the number of critical marks --- to balance this with positive marking'.

G.K. 'recurring mistakes are noted, and a comment --- made. ... I used frequently to tick I have found that I use visible marks on paper far less.'

G.K. 'Usually a written comment is a conversational mode.'

I.R. 'My written comments sometimes become a dialogue between myself and the child - I write, he writes back.'

S.J. 'If --- their work is ignored --- the piece of work, and they themselves, have been devalued.'

M.C. 'comments should be --- encouraging to the child --- too much criticism can be counter-productive.'

I.R. 'Correction - always positive.'

J.G. 'go through the work with the child at her side.'

G.K. 'a teacher reads a piece of written work immediately it is completed'

F.S. 'a modest programme of discussion of the child's work.'

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Most teachers expressed their willingness to put grammar and spelling to one side (except J.B. and J.S.) in the creative writing session, but their remarks show that the responsibility to teach the mechanics of literacy is not being avoided. Rather, that responsibility threatens to overwhelm creativity in language unless the teacher is convinced of the priority of poetry.

4. ASSESSMENT - ERROR.

F.S. 'I think creative writing should be kept quite distinct from the important basic literary skills'

S.P. 'Correction may be necessary --- but should not be seen by the children to be the major criterion'

S.J. 'a fair copy --- I expect it to be well written, correctly spelt'

G.K. 'undue attention to spelling, grammar or form might destroy a piece of work.'

M.C. 'I would regard errors in spelling and punctuation to be secondary.'

R.E. (the) inhibiting effect of over-marking mechanical errors.'

R.E. 'It is no use --- making attempts to highlight every mechanical error a child has made.'

M.C. 'the only change I have made is a less rigorous attack on grammar and spelling'

M.C. 'I expect this (grammatical accuracy) to be lacking in most pieces of work.'

S.J. 'I used to correct every spelling and grammatical error in red - --- now I note them in my book'

F.S. 'The knowledge that this sort of writing was then going to be marked critically would --- be enough to kill it.'

J.S. 'Correction of spelling, letter formation and so on is necessary to make the writing available to others'

J.S. 'there are correct ways of working that can be learnt.'

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F.S. 'I was struck by the predominance of children's formal writing as the accepted means of their education and assessment.'

M.C. 'a piece of work, rewritten after some correction, displayed'

S.P. 'the final product --- corrected and improved by the child'

J.S. 'Any work displayed should --- be correct, copied out'

In discussing their objectives, teachers inevitably show their own bias. Their appreciation of the children's work indicates what should be praised, what should be valued, although it is generally a vague statement.

5. ASSESSMENT - PRAISE - PREFERENCE.

I.R. 'once a child knows his work is being valued as a piece of literature rather than an exercise to be assess, his motivation --- increases vastly.'

S.P. 'Taking apart a piece of creative writing --- will add little to our understanding or appreciation of it --- Form and meaning should not be divided'

R.E. 'Correction will depend entirely on the purpose of the writing'

M.C. 'I have a preference for work written in poetic style'

S.J. 'teachers get the quality of work they expect. --- I prefer quality to quantity'

I.R. 'things to praise - an unusual twinning of noun and adjectives, an emotive word, any evidences of sincerity.'

S.P. 'we should be looking for original and authentic expression'

The most highly and generally valued feature of children's writing was, emphatically, a sensitive, individual response to the motivation to write, whether prompted by the teacher or the pupil's own experience: his desire to communicate, or his skill in doing so. Only one contributor (S.J.) failed to mention this directly, but she did express a related view: creativity is of therapeutic value to children who have emotional problems.

CHAPTER 7. Personal Statements Part 1.

This implies that the personal nature of the content is to be more highly prized than skill in writing down what has been experienced, although the stimulus for the writing may be in the form of an example of good writing.

6. PERSONAL - INDIVIDUAL

F.S. 'the writing they do as a distinctly personal, mainly subjective response'

'Recognition and clarification of their own ideas'

'their own distinctive voice'

'a view I can respect because it is truly his own'

'start me towards looking (listening?) for a child's own authentic voice in what was written.'

'In on-going development I look --- for movement in the complex area of confidence/personal drive'

'the child --- saying what he wants to say'

J.S. 'Children --- are what they imagine.'

'Some children regard this (display, reading out) as an invasion of their privacy.'

'can the teacher see the personal aspects; the things that make it individual?'

J.B. 'All our children are individuals'

'We want our children to be able to express themselves as individuals.'

S.P. 'to understand and come to terms with problems in their own lives'

S.P. 'authentic expression of the imaginative world of each individual child'

'creative writing is very personal --- may need to be kept strictly between teacher and pupil'

'It is possible to assess subjectively from one's own personal response'

S.P. 'creative writing is concerned with communication at a personal level.'

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G.K. 'creative expression involves the whole person'

'it involves a search into deeper levels of personal consciousness'

'(it) allows the child to organize his own mental image of the work in his terms'

'individual oral contribution is important'

'Compared with the child's own previous contributions.'

'to make the child aware of his own progress'

'creative writing --- as part of a child's own hand-made book'

'to communicate with the child so that he is aware of his own progress'

'Request (for creative writing) -- outside the range of their own experience'

M.C. 'If creative writing is a personal matter --- the teacher should respect the choice of language'

'Because creative writing is a personal matter too much criticism can be counter-productive.'

M.C. 'A child's personal ability should be kept in mind --- teacher should try to assess --- good or bad for each individual'

R.E. 'through entering into a closer relationship with their imaginings'

'I expect some sort of genuine response to the stimulus'

'pupils can work out personal fantasies and --- arrive at a closer understanding of their own personal role'

'Respect for a personal response is vital'

'the foundation from which a child can build his own way of writing.'

I.R. 'To ask a child to open his inner world to an adult --- is asking too much.'

'his work is being valued --- his motivation towards self-expression increases vastly.'

It was interesting to find that a group of people who professed to valuing individuality did, in fact, have individual views of their own. These did not disagree directly with the statements of the rest of the group, but indicated some areas of thought about writing in school to which other teachers may usefully give some consideration, and about which they could be asked to comment.

7. IDIOSYNCRATIC.

F.S. 'I think this kind of writing should arise from experience --- that has been mulled over, allowed to simmer for at least a few hours, talked about more or less at leisure.'

J.S. 'on no account must the teacher write on or 'correct' imaginative writing just as she shouldn't draw or touch up a child's painting.'

J.G. 'It is so stimulating to look at the world through the eyes of a child again! There is so much we can learn from each other when it comes to creative writing.'

S.P. 'Children can be equipped with the necessary tools for writing --- They can also be introduced to prose and poetry --- Beyond this I do not believe creative writing can be taught.'

S.J. 'If a new skill is applied creatively by the child it is usually well retained by them.'

G.K. 'taken into account when planning the next creative language session. e.g. Too much adult response in preceding discussion.'

M.C. 'These children may lack the fluency of their abler peers but as a result often write with a well chosen economy of words which can have a dramatic effect.'

R.E. 'When writing poetry pupils often make progress by having clear examples of a type of poem in mind --- This is a form of copying but a valid one as it can be the foundation from which a child can build'

I.R. 'It would be unfair to an imaginative child with a flare for

CHAPTER 7. Personal Statements Part 1.

expression if one never put a grade --- if he lives in a school world where talents are acknowledged in this way.'

Before attempting to draw further conclusions from these contributions, they may be put into more useful perspective by reference to an interview with a headteacher, and two statements about writing poetry. (Chaper 8).

Analysis of the statements : what they left out.

All the teachers concerned show a responsible attitude to a child's emotional needs and the need to develop skills. They show a respect for the value of creative writing in school, and a willingness to give time and attention to this in their classrooms.

A more thorough exploration of the contributors' opinions and practice would include questions about.

1. Personal involvement in
 - (i) creative writing
 - (ii) reading aloud, to children
 - (iii) reading privately to promote informed judgement.
2. Ability of teacher to state the case for creative writing clearly with reference to authoritative voices.
3. Professional assessment of the child's written work with respect to
 - (i) achievement, to maintain standards of excellence
 - (ii) needs, to plan curriculum development and individual programmes.

CHAPTER 8. Personal Statements Part 2.

The review of the literature (Chapter 2) brought sharply into focus the presence of the poetic spirit in the theory and practice of education. There is no lack of evidence in our schools of the determination of the minority group who impart and practise poetry in the classroom, sometimes in circumstances which are severely inimical to creativity in language. They are ill-served by the half-hearted, and by those who cannot accept the challenge to explain what is useful and civilizing, moving and vital in children's personal writing. It seemed politic to pursue further this grass roots conviction in a way that would persuade teachers to be more forthcoming about assessment and about their value judgements, than in a written statement.

Patton (1980) provides a comprehensive guide to qualitative evaluation methods in which he states

'the evaluator using a qualitative approach to measurement seeks to capture what people have to say in their own words. Qualitative measures describe the experiences of people in depth. The data are open-ended in order to find out what people's lives, experiences, and interactions mean to them in their own terms and in their natural settings.'

(Patton, 1980, p22.)

The written statements were made in answer to open-ended questions, but those teachers who were not, unlike Sheila Parry and Judith Sharman, for instance (Appendix C), recently involved in academic professional discourse, could be said to be answering them in an unnatural setting.

The statement 'Teacher at Menai' (Appendix C) was written at the request of the teacher's headmaster, for publication in a Cheshire L.E.A.

CHAPTER 8. Personal Statements Part 2.

publication which was discontinued for financial reasons. It was one of the rare occasions on which a teacher was asked to record her experience, but was only incidently relevant to this study.

The interview with Jack Cornall took place in the study at a training college, and John Rayner was interviewed in the home of a friend. These premises were quiet and free from interruption. Both subjects were willing to be interviewed, and were not inhibited by the presence of the tape recorder from which the transcripts were made later, and of which they could have copies.

There are weaknesses in the methodology; qualitative analysis of this kind requires special expertise in identifying a group of people who can make valid contributions, in the skills of interviewing, and in interpreting the data. The paramount attraction of this strategy has been stated:

'The fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms.'

(ibid. p.205)

It is possible that the flexibility and originality of teachers' personal responses could also be expressed by using repertory grid technique, devised by Kelly (1955) as a method of exploring personal construct theory. A construct is a particular kind of category, particular in that it is unique to the person using it. It may be elicited in the form of a semantic differential (Fransella and Bannister, 1977, p.111), already used in this study (Chapters 3 and 4), but the subject is free to delineate individual meanings.

The format described by Patton as the 'general interview guide approach' (Patton, 1980, p.198) seemed to offer a way of using experience gained from extracting written personal statements and expanding this into the area of doubt i.e. what were practising teachers expecting children to produce in creative writing? There should be some way of elucidating their commitment beyond the universal 'personal response', otherwise the objective assessment attempted by using the semantic differential and focused holistic scoring would have no relevance at all to practising teachers. The interview with Jack Cornall (Appendix C) seemed, at first, to provide only similar evidence to that collected in writing. Using the same collective headings, the following quotations may be selected.

1. ASSESSMENT - ACHIEVEMENT

J.C. 'I find it very difficult to measure the achievements in creative writing from other schools. I think you get so personally involved.'

2. ASSESSMENT - EXPECTATIONS.

J.C. 'To start with, it's to be a workshop --- It's a matter of pouring thoughts down on to paper.'

'they've been given some form of stimulus or encouragement for writing. Then you've worked with the writing alongside the child. You've talked about it and made them feel that what the child says is important. And when they've got this feeling that they can write ... after they've worked with you on two or three occasions they know what sort of work you're expecting.'

3. ASSESSMENT - CORRECTION - CRITICISM - COMMENT

J.C. 'I've never used any form of graded assessment, not ever. Only in mathematics.'

'I would say, "This is good", or "I've really enjoyed reading this" and I'd write it on the bottom.'

4. ASSESSMENT - ERROR

J.C. 'You are then exceedingly busy --- helping children change things round --- Do you think that would be better there? Look, that piece scans, needs a little rhyme on the end. --- They go away, --- to do a second draft.'

'And only after they've been put down, --- talking about how all those cliches can be removed.'

5. ASSESSMENT - PRAISE - PREFERENCE

J.C. 'Really,. you're looking for something creative'

'You might pick some bits of work from children and read them out --- you make sure you never pick the same people all the time.'

'When the piece is finished it can be put into a book of the children's own poems or put up on display. Either way, it's kept.'

6. PERSONAL - INDIVIDUAL.

J.C. 'the original thoughts of the child, which are more important than comprehension exercises or anything else ---'

'You're looking for something that's said in a way that's different to the way that anybody's ever said it before.'

'You can't really do it with a class of thirty.'

There comes through the voice of the teacher, the language he uses in which to think, and an urgent and energentic use of his rapport with the children to teach them to be discriminating during the creative process. His description of the workshop lesson implies this assessment by the teacher and child as going on continuously through several drafts until a satisfying result is achieved.

It is unlikely that a teacher who, as Jack Cornall does, writes and reads poetry and brings it alive into the classroom, will be satisfied with second-rate writing. But even he has sensed a danger in this

subjective judgement.

'I certainly don't seem to be very turned on by things that other teachers offer me in the way of poetry and creative writing, the best their children have done, although they may be better than what mine are doing. The thing is, we've been doing it together, and we've been involved in an experience --- it's a bit special to all of you who were involved.'

(Cornall, Appendix C.)

This is an admission unlikely to emerge from a questionnaire, open-ended or otherwise. This implied acceptance that an objective view of children's poetic writing might be valuable, by a teacher who is accounted successful in this field (Cornall, 1981) is an important adjunct to any further research into feasible objective assessment, and should be sought in other teachers' attitudes.

It must be pointed out that it is unwise to make generalisations from one interview and an unpublished thesis, and what is included here is only an indication of how such material might be obtained and used.

It would make nonsense, though, of ages of cultural development if this research ever refused to recognise that 'something special from particular children' (Cornall, Appendix C). Attempts to define it tend to be somewhat discursive, but to this end Appendix C includes the transcript of a conversation with a young poet, and an account of a residential visit to the Menai Centre, Anglesey, by a teacher. John Rayner (Appendix C) could be said to be representing the experience the children must enjoy if they are to be fully and productively involved in poetry.

CHAPTER 8. Personal Statements Part 2.

'The truth of that feeling is what matters most, no matter how you can try and convey that feeling - that doesn't matter at all. The point is that you've got something to say that really grips you soul, deep down, and you want to communicate it to other human beings.'

(Rayner, Appendix C)

No teacher would presume to be able to inculcate such passion into the classroom every time the children were asked to write about their own reactions to a stimulus, whether provided by accident or design. But the best teachers will appreciate the moment when it happens.

'I believe they could not express the emotional charge of the moment, but had lived for five days in such a devoted state of reception that all their living will be coloured by it, begetting sensitive phrases and acts of unselfishness.'

(Teacher at Menai, Appendix C)

If we can teach children to 'express the emotional charge of the moment' it will be through putting into their heads and hands the skills they need, including exercise in the perception of those skills in the poetry of others. For although a young poet may be able to say that 'how' doesn't matter at all, teachers are in the business of setting standards, and making it possible for children to do what they couldn't do before. Practice makes perfect; an objective assessment of the stages along the way to perfection can only help to make that progress more rapid and more satisfying.

CHAPTER 9. Discussion.

In this chapter an attempt is made to articulate three major problems attending the assessment of writing in the creative mode which have been significantly prominent in this research. The way in which these problems will affect the strategies employed in developing assessment is then indicated.

Teaching children to write poetically

'--- it has frequently been implied that it is for "English" (lessons) to ensure that young people can use linguistic conventions, but that English teachers neglect them in the promotion of "self-expression". The two are not, of their nature, opposites; they are opposites only in the minds of those who put them in opposition and take one side or the other.'

(HMI, 1977, in OU.PE.232 1979,p.64)

The assessor of children's writing is one of those who 'put them in opposition'. Throughout this study the conflict has been demonstrated, and not resolved. It exists alongside another, which is continually at the forefront of the difficult choice in priorities which teachers must make in planning the curriculum. This second conflict is between the demands made upon teachers to promote writing and the demand for evaluation. It is significant that so many volumes have been devoted to the ways in which children may be motivated, even pressurized, into putting their thoughts down on paper, but that few of these are concerned to point out (except by putting forward examples without comment) what exactly is admirable in a particular piece of work. Two publications will serve to demonstrate this imbalance. They also show how those most concerned to foster children's attempts to write poetry are creating a disadvantage for their pupils if they do not, at some stage, attempt

CHAPTER 9. Discussion.

an objective view of the results.

Benton (1978) is well aware of the responsibilities of the teacher of English.

'A response becomes enough in itself ----. In extreme cases this can lead to the withholding of criticism, to the feeling that anything goes and to the abrogation of our responsibility to teach children to write.'

(ibid. p.3.)

This could be used to describe the attitude of some of those making the personal statements (Appendix C). Benton goes on to describe a way of using what writers have to say about the creative process to provide 'guidelines for the practice of creative writing in schools' (ibid.p.12) But having considered this at some length, he deals with criticism in a very ordinary way.

'(the) practical business of providing a known outlet for poems and stories through magazines, displays --- and the like --- sensitive comment from the teacher to the individual child about the details of his writing. The teacher's role is a tricky one for he is aiming at intervention without interference --- his concern will be primarily with "how" questions.'

(ibid. p.14)

No examples are given of the development which would be expected to take place. The description of what happens between child and teacher is less exact than that supplied by Cornall (Interview, Appendix C.). One is still left with 'the feeling that anything goes' and that an inordinate amount of time and effort is planned for production with

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little or no reflection on the quality of the writing that Benton is devotedly fostering.

Again, Brownjohn (1980, 1982) professes a critical standpoint
'Do not expect each child to produce a good piece of work
every time. No poet can write a masterpiece with every poem.
There will be failures. Sometimes writers are just not in the
mood, for some reason the ideas will not come or will not
fall into place. Tell the children this, and they will not use
it as an excuse; it is more likely to encourage.

--- Encourage children to re-work poems as a "real" poet
does. Until the children are used to writing poems it
will be necessary for you to go through much of their work
to help them ---!

(Brownjohn, 1980,p.87)

Does not the teacher have then, the same excuse when pupils are
unsuccessful in writing creatively at his suggestion? Both books by
Brownjohn (1980, 1982) are based on a series of ideas for lessons, ways
of teaching children how to write poetry. They are very popular with
teachers in junior and secondary schools, and are, presumably, popular
because they get results. Yet the author feels the need to leave a
loophole for child and teacher. In 'Does it have to Rhyme' (Brownjohn,
1980) forty out of ninety-six pages are devoted to examples of children's
poems. At no point does the compiler indicate the root of their value
except as successful exponents of the gimmick to be 'illustrated'. One
receives an impression of a gifted teacher, justly proud of the achieve-
ment of some of her more gifted pupils. But it is left entirely to the
reader to elucidate the elements in the children's writing that make
it pleasing, that makes one more nearly a 'masterpiece' than another.

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Brownjohn is selling starting points, Benton insists on 'silence to think'. (Benton, 1978,p.14). They both accept without question that attempting to write poetry is an essential part of the writing taking place in school, but this conviction does not include (it could almost be said to exclude) the objective analysis of what children produce.

If it is accepted, and expected, that teachers are accountable for the progress their pupils make, this avoidance of the issue of assessment in creative writing can only work against the ideals and aspirations of those who, like the teachers who have made themselves accountable for this study, have based their professional ethos on a personal conviction that children should be encouraged to write imaginatively and creatively. Unless they master the problems of objectivity they endanger the child's capacity for self-criticism, and have no way of answering this kind of attack:

'It was generally assumed that a piece of creative writing, however inaccurately expressed, was by its very nature more authentic (and therefore better) than a piece in which the free flow of the imagination had been controlled by the disciplines of grammar --- Middle-class children from literate homes, with access to books and extra coaching, could afford to indulge in a little creative writing.'

(Rae, 1982,p.41)

The H.M.I. report (1977) glosses over the question of accountability.

'He should be able --- to respond personally to aesthetic experience --- success in these kinds of writing needs to be judged from evidence that he has genuinely become engaged in it. It may be misleading to ask for too precise a "terminal"

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achievement in one's native language at 16.'

(H.M.I. 1977, in OU.PE 232,p.66)

This last statement is a direct affirmation of the personal statements concerned with PERSONAL - INDIVIDUAL aspects (Chapter 7) although they are from teachers of junior, not secondary children. The demand for assessment does not, unfortunately, come from those who see creative writing as an enlightened activity in its own right, set apart from the excellence of the writing produced. The lack of attention given to an informed and appreciative defence of the end product can only discredit the motives, the clarity of thought, and the credibility of those who believe that children can and should write poetically.

Accident or design?

The second problem that needs elaboration is that of the element of chance in children's choice of words. Carruthers (Appendix C) has noticed something of this kind.

'I have often read poems of children of low R.Q.'s which have, in spite of poor visual appearance, some imaginative worth. These children may lack the fluency of their abler peers but as a result often write with a well chosen economy of words which can have quite a dramatic effect. Their vocabulary may be limited and heavily dependent on suggestions made during the lesson. However, the very fact that they are unable to write extensively seems to help them produce something well worth reading.'

A brief but effective illustration of this phenomenon was used on the

cover of Block 3 in the Open University Course 'Language and Learning'. (OU, 1973). This unit described some aspects of the work of Bernstein (1971) and most teachers have developed an ear for that difference in language facility which he defined as 'elaborated' and 'restricted' codes. The front cover shows a girl, about seven years old, with blonde curls, wearing a tie, shirt blouse and pullover. She is concentrating.

The caption reads,

Question: What is a dog? Answer: A dog is furry and barks.

On the back cover is a boy. His pullover is handknitted and he has no tie. He may be the same age as the girl, but he is less assured, unhappy, puzzled by school. The caption reads,

Question: What is a dog? Answer: You have a dog at home.

Now any poet will unhesitatingly respond to the ellipsis in the boy's answer, the unspoken but keenly felt wanting to be at home where dogs are allowed, and movement and playing with dogs, who do not ask silly questions. But that is an example of restricted code. The little girl, with access to elaborated code, knows that questions should be answered in a way that shows that you know what is being talked about. School is a place where you answer questions in that way. Teacher will tell you when and how to use your imagination, in which case the dog will become furry as a rug which barks like a gun. The girl understands both context and audience. The boy makes a personal response. Who gets the laurel wreath?

These felicitous accidents cannot be ignored. Some poets produce them as evidence of inspiration. Dylan Thomas said :

'I learned that the bad tricks come easy; and the good ones, which help you to say what you wish to say in the most meaningful, moving way, I am, of course, still learning.'

(Fitzgibbon, 1965, p.45).

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The Dadaists and Surrealists played a game which is a version of 'Consequences' in which the players contribute to the sequence, adjective/adjective/noun/verb/adjective/adjective/noun, in turn, without knowing what other words are involved. Finally a sentence is composed, which might be:

'The blue, sharp mushroom squeaked at the wrong, intermittent radiator.'
or,

'A righteous, fat soldier swam the curved, silent floor.'

The game does open one's mind to the possibilities inherent in fortuitous combinations. 'Curved, silent floor' could be an evocative phrase connected with a deserted building. It is part of the pattern of poetry-making to search for unusual connections with which to make similes and metaphors, and if in that search a child discovered, by accident, a phrase which touches the heart of the imagination we should, in rejecting it, reject also much English poetry. 'To take arms against a sea of troubles' ('Hamlet', iii.i.56) might have emerged from playing with words in this way. It will probably be from the models we put before the children that they will learn to distinguish between an enlightening, original association and a nonsense phrase. When they have decided, the assessor can examine the result.

Making allowances.

Richards (1929) was more concerned with the ability of his students to assess than with the intrinsic value of the poems which he put before them stripped of author and source. As an authority in his own right, his judgement was not disputed. But that judgement was made with pre-knowledge, which he used in his reasoned and perceptive evaluations.

Should we, as teachers, show our authoritative expertise by making our assessments of children's writing depend solely on the written word?

Throughout this study the teachers concerned have shown a reluctance

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to meet this demand affirmatively. They are intimately concerned with handwriting, spelling, punctuation and their own part in prompting writing, and do not easily put this concern on one side. Also, there is an attitude of mind, supported by the way in which standardized tests adjust quotients to children's ages, which makes it difficult for some teachers to divorce achievement from potential. Added to this is the individual relationship between teacher and pupil, between audience and writer, which must be maintained in harmony.

At some point the decision must be taken to look at the child's writing in isolation from the child. It can be a separate point of view from that which colours day-to-day discussion and suggestion. But in order to be objective about poetic quality, as far as we say, a separation must take place.

If we accept that a child's writing must be assessed with due attention paid to the developmental stages inherent in the proposition that a pupil's writing is going to improve (because he is taught, and learning takes place) the contribution of that child's creative faculty is inextricably linked with the extent to which he can use skills. It is possible to put some of these skills into perspective in order to focus on the creative achievement, viz. handwriting, spelling, the use of full stops and capital letters. Even so, the teacher who is responsible for a child's general progress in written English cannot resign from his responsibility in a teaching/learning situation. There is clearly a need for the assessment of creative achievement in writing to be considered as a separate issue by the teacher, and that this should be done with two separate purposes in mind.

- (i) to assess a child's piece of writing for its poetic qualities.
- (ii) to present the results of his assessment to the child sympathetically and usefully.

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The first of these purposes is that upon which this study has chosen to concentrate, although many teachers are so concerned with the second purpose, because it is an immediate necessity in the classroom workshop, that the evidence upon which poetic quality is based is unreasoned and inarticulate. There should be an attempt to isolate commendable features, and an ability exercised by the teacher to provide commendable examples, otherwise the notion of quality becomes obscure. The standards which are expected at different stages in a child's development, in handwriting, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary are much more readily understood and accepted. They are more readily explained to children, who are increasingly aware of how such skills can be used to produce writing which is satisfactory to teacher and pupil. Thus, the concept of improvement is lodged very firmly within these skills.

Now it would seem that teachers, when asked to assess creative writing, are very anxious to take into account the level at which the child is able to perform at the time of writing. There were occasions, described in Chapter 4 and Chapter 7, when teachers were at a loss when asked to assess a child's writing without any background knowledge of the child, or his previous work. For some teachers, children's writing had no intrinsic good or bad qualities except in relation to their expectation of a particular child. This may be acceptable practice when making an assessment for the child himself, and this is in the best traditions of encouragement and positive comment. It appears that these teachers had accepted, ipso facto, that poetic qualities would be subject to a similar scale of allowances for immaturity (whether technical or intellectual) as other kinds of writing. When the mechanism of the semantic differential was made clear to them it was found possible to look for evidence of the expression of literary quality (as between the pairs of bi-polar adjectives e.g. innovating/imitative) in the text as a separate entity

from the pupil.

This was an unfamiliar approach. It concentrated, to an extent not previously envisaged in any former judgements they had made, on factors which would contribute to poetic quality, and to that only. What was not questioned at this stage, but must in future research be kept in mind, is that there are aspects of language development which cannot be separated from a child's ability to compose a poetic expression. The most obvious of these is vocabulary. If a distinction is being made between language that is 'sophisticated' or 'naive', for example, it is more likely that children who read easily and widely will be able to write with that command of adult phraseology which gives credit for sophistication. An adult may write 'seismic catastrophe' instead of 'earthquake' (Wheeler, 1983, p.3) as a feature of his style and his awareness of audience, and not in an attempt to write poetry. With some loss of simplicity, it may be possible to include this kind of judgement in the use of the semantic differential. It has been noted that any extension of this procedure would require statistical analysis of a much greater number of examples of its application to establish factor identifications for the pairs of bi-polar adjectives. This could include an attempt to allow for bias in the pairs of adjectives most subject to developmental influences. In the application of focused holistic scoring, as will be suggested, it is possible to be much more specific about what words children might use. And it is then, when we define expectations not only of skill but of knowledge as well, that the age and experience of the child become part of our judgement.

It is not suggested that these assessments of children's writing, typewritten and anonymous, should be passed back to them as an unadulterated grade or rank order. What is suggested, and has emerged from this study as being a necessary exercise in an area of judgement which relies heavily

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on intuition, is that more objective, organized thinking would result in informed judgements that would direct the more intimate comments made to individuals in the classroom. Reasoned analysis, far from conflicting with choice directed by unspecified preference, seems in the case of using the semantic differential and in focused holistic scoring to be generally in agreement with that preference. What an objective approach does, which individual comment and unsupported rank orders do not, is to substantiate intuition in terms which obviate the criticism levelled at a convinced but vulnerable body in the teaching profession; those who teach children to write in the poetic mode.

Teachers should be able to explain what they are trying to do, and the personal statements (Appendix C) are, in general terms, successful in this. But there seems to be very little here, or elsewhere, to guide anyone towards an appreciation of what children ought to be able to achieve in creative writing, and of what that achievement might consist. After making allowance for the inherent difficulties in making judgements about any creative art, we cannot avoid our duty to demonstrate how and where progress is being made in pupils' learning. If creative writing is important, it should be possible, and even exciting, to defend it with intelligence as well as affection.

Future developments

(i) The semantic differential.

This exercise, as may be seen from Chapters 3 and 4, was most interesting in that

- (a) it provided an objective assessment which did not conflict with subjective judgements in common practice
- (b) it indicated the objections which would be raised to objective assessment by practising teachers
- (c) it was easily administered.

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This last consideration is one which no researcher in this field can afford to ignore, but it must be said that the interpretation of the results beyond a mere order of merit required a time-consuming examination of the manner in which any piece of writing was awarded points by each assessor. Coupled with this, a proper statistical evaluation of the appropriate leading factors associated with the pairs of polar adjectives would be necessary to make the whole process valid. In the light of subsequent research, this would not seem to be the most convincing way of meeting the needs of teachers who are already suspicious of attempts to enumerate their receptive faculties, or those of their pupils.

(ii) Focused holistic scoring.

Although this is more time-consuming, it appears to be capable of adjustment to a variety of outcomes in a way that is both flexible and specific. The most promising aspect of assessing writing in this way is that features to be commanded are anticipated and evaluated in some detail and decisions have to be made and clearly expressed about what is to be expected from the children's writing. Delight and sensitivity are not excluded, but given recognisable dimensions. Whether or not a piece of writing is put at Scale 3 or Scale 4 is not as important as why it is put there, and this involves a much more searching and rewarding reading of compositions than that which leads to the non-committal praise much favoured by those who decry an objective approach.

A wide variety of scripts would have to be examined before this method of assessment could be fully exploited. It has been suggested that a range of stimuli could be provided for children, engaging the attention of the five senses.

- (a) a picture (sight) as in this study
- (b) a piece of music (hearing)
- (c) a poem (vicarious experience)

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- (d) swimming (taste, smell included)
- (e) making bread (touch, smell included)

This would approach a testing situation, in that the teacher in charge would have to refrain from that promotion and suggestive assistance which is generally part of the teaching situation. However, if the writing produced from these sessions served to indicate the use of focused holistic scoring, the scale point descriptions which emerged would be at the service of other teachers to use in assessing their children's writing in the knowledge of their own input into the lesson.

The next stage would be, with one set of anonymous scripts from different age groups and schools, to design the score point descriptions. To do this it is necessary to refer to the four sources for criteria used by Greenhalgh and Townsend (1981,p.812) and summarised in Chapter 5. One of these sources is the developmental capabilities of students. Although it is not intended, in holistic scoring, to penalize young writers for writing in ways appropriate to their ages, it should be possible to detect a progression. As children's writing improves, as one would hope it would, the particular features in the score points which indicate maturity and skill in expressing their response to the stimuli (a) - (e), in the poetic mode, should show how the writing is improving. (A longitudinal study plotting the progress of children through junior years would be even more enlightening).

The researcher would have to pick out, sometimes anticipate, the most important verbal and sensory clues the children would be expected to notice. The dominant mode would be descriptive, the dominant purpose expressive, as in the case of the picture already used. The frame-work of this assessment allows one to see 'cold as ice' as undesirable, and 'cold as a butcher's shop' as credit worthy, and the assessor has to

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pin-point where the points are allotted. In using a range of stimuli it may be possible to make the scale point descriptions more easily adaptable to other stimuli, as well as providing enough variety, a range of possible interests and experiences for the children to draw on. But the prime objective would be to find out the nature of development; what we might expect from children, and how to help them achieve demonstrably worthwhile results.

There is another way in which focused holistic scoring could be used, to improve educational practice. It was evident during the in-service courses that a productive dialogue could ensue when teachers were asked to use it, although for the purposes of this study their personal opinion was sought rather than a group decision. If the composition of score point descriptions could be undertaken by a discussion group, and their conclusions matched with those of other similar groups, the detailed examination of children's texts and teacher s' expectations would bring about that conscious and articulate discernment which is lacking in comments made in situ to children. As a result, these comments might in themselves become more discerning and instructive, and teachers would have, among their colleagues, a platform on which to express the academic judgement which they must learn to make even if it reaches the children in a modified form.

There is also a place in in-service training for giving teachers the opportunity to apply focused holistic scoring to the writing produced by their own pupils, having been instructed how to designate the characteristics of score points to be applied to writing tasks with which they themselves would hope to encourage personal writing in the poetic mode. The exercise of discrimination in this assessment could lead to a more thoughtful appraisal of the various starting points and stimuli that teachers use to encourage children to write poetry, as the

means have to be considered in defining what the ends might be.

(iii) Interviews.

Parallel to these exploratory procedures, there appears to be much more to be learnt about how they would be received and used by practising teachers. This could be anticipated, and the expectations stated in the descriptions of score points made more relevant, if the interview approach was used to invite teachers to make specific comments about children's writing. It would have to be borne in mind that the comments needed for objective assessment are in a different category from those made to the children, although this study has shown (Chapter 6) that teachers could make comments which were at the same time encouraging and indicative of the exact location of praiseworthy phrases. It would also have to be borne in mind that teachers who respond intuitively to creative writing are not always aware of the causes of their praise and dissatisfaction, and could well be in need of some fine tuning in their ear for poetry. It may well be that teachers who are asked to take part in various kinds of assessment, or who are interviewed about their approach to assessment, should be invited, as the four teachers in the pilot study were required to do (Chapter 3), to make judgements about adult poetry as well. This would extend the credibility of their subjective approach, and increase the value of any procedure for assessment arising out of a study of the way in which it could be applied.

The interview is, in this case, an assessment of the teacher rather than the written outcomes of classroom procedures. But it is teachers' attitudes which will eventually direct how and how much any kind of assessment is used, and their attitudes must inform any research which may be used to construct a format that they will accept. It is in the statements from teachers that one finds that conviction about the communication of a personal response being central to poetic expression

CHAPTER 9. Discussion

which transcends the anxieties about progress (or lack of it) in writing skills.

It should also be possible to extend the debate regarding 'process' and 'product' emphasis in the curriculum (Stenhouse 1975). It has been said that the value of assessment is the value of the experience (of writing poetry) in the total growth of the child. Reverence for that experience is inherent in this study, but there is a discipline in literary appreciation without which teachers cannot comment with authority on the writing of children or upon any written material used in the classroom. The element of coercion in establishing graded patterns within creative activities will be vigorously resisted by those who care most sensitively for uninhibited emotional and linguistic development, and they should be asked to make their demands explicit in their own terms, so that the process of communication between instigator (teacher, child) and product (poetry, poet) is encouraged to operate at the highest level of achievement of which each is capable. The way in which teachers in doubt are thinking about the writing of the children they teach may be explored very usefully by interviews directed towards the appreciation of examples from their own classrooms, and this could include their reaction to the application of focused holistic scoring.

In Conclusion.

This study was initiated by a concern for the standards set in classrooms by teachers who purported to be teaching children to write poetry. The issue may be avoided by saying 'encouraging children' or 'allowing children' to write poetry, or by substituting 'to write poetically', 'to write creatively' or some other compromise. But none of the teachers asked said that assessment was impossible, and they were all directing children's attention towards poetry in their writing. My own view is that their diffidence, and mine, is founded in the belief that there is a talent associated with the writing of poetry which individuals have to a greater or lesser degree, which may be compared to that talent which is associated with composing music. We may encourage, we may teach skills and impart knowledge, we may even demand, but the response of each pupil will always be centred on a gift. Discipline and craft are its servants.

This belief is central to any attempt to separate children's writing from the children who write it. The developmental progress of creativity can be seen as children are taught and practise the arts of communication, and one has every right to expect that a child who is surrounded by poetry and has his own efforts praised and assisted will, in time, produce better results. But the reluctance of teachers to put on one side their knowledge of anything in a child's intellectual and emotional development which would help them to understand how much of his achievement is (for him) something apart from writing in English shows that they suspect there is a special quality. They instinctively wish to be allowed to look for it within the context of general development, rather than risk confusing expertise with ecstasy.

In order to make assessments of writing in the poetic mode we must be

CHAPTER 9 Discussion

aware of how children's writing develops, and what aspects of the craft of poetry which we try to teach are likely to contribute to success at different stages. The usual analogy is that of the flowering plant which must be nurtured in order to survive and bloom. This describes very well the process we are looking at when we incorporate in assessment all the different kinds of learning which go towards the achievement of a poem. Because this aligns with practice, holistic scoring is probably the best way to approach the assessment of poetic writing, and when it designates the aims of the teacher it must go some way to promoting that combination of sensitivity and reason in literary appreciation which the original concern for standards of excellence wished to foster. But there is another analogy, that of the diamond. What if we have, in some children, a rare prismatic quality which requires exposing and shaping? The uncut stone is recognizable before it shows all its brilliance, becomes in Gerard Manley Hopkins' s phrase 'immortal diamond'.

A study designed to show the developmental stages in creative writing would, if this is true, produce anomalies of the kind which are noticed when infant and junior work on the same theme is compared and which from time to time surprise teachers who have conservative expectations. These anomalies are often attributed to successful teaching situations. Only a detailed study across a wide age range could clarify the issue, and a study of this kind appears to be necessary to expedite the analysis of immature writing in general. (See Future developments (ii) in this chapter.)

Perhaps only poets are equipped to explain poetry, and that is why Sheila Parry's poem is included in support of this conviction. It may not be proved by any research that poets are born and not made, and in any case the experience of practising the craft of poetry is one we should provide in schools and will demand assessment which appreciates the

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the compositions of all our pupils.

The co-operation and patience of friends and colleagues has been essential to the progress of this investigation, and is gratefully acknowledged, although some of them do not believe in diamonds and put their faith in green fingers. We do agree, though, about the importance of junior children's writing in the creative mode, and treat their art with respect.

The ultimate purpose of this research is seen as a demonstration of that respect, in accessible and acceptable terms, which promotes the development of creative language skills and talent in pupil and teacher.

CHAPTER 9. Discussion

SHEILA PARRY

Poetry

To break the word
from living rock
 of language
is hard, mind-bending work.

To shape the saying
 into meaning
draws blood from
 silent stone.
hurling thunderbolts
 of thought
across the desert of despair.

Not always recollected
 in tranquility
but torn as roots
 of ancient trees
from iron-hardened earth.

Formed from fusion
 of experience
flowing molten from
 the fires of life
to be re-cast
 in new-made moulds
for children yet unborn.

And yet to-day in simple words
falling as easily
 as April rain,
a young girl
 told her fears
and softly sang her pain.

APPENDIX A. Material supplied to teachers during in-service
course October 1981

CHILDREN WRITING A.

KAREN

We line up outside the hall:

Great, it's P.E. today.

We go inside.

'Line up,' says Mrs Cowley.

Reds there, greens and blues,

Yellows go on the crash mats.

The reds are on the best thing,

Lucy I'm in the reds,

I climb up the ladder,

Then get on the form.

I think I will be daring,

I will try a backward roll.

Curl up,

And then push off with my feet.

Phew, I've done it without falling off.

I uncurl slowly and jump onto the form,

Stretching in my leaping movement,

And landing on the floor with a

THUMP.

Now it's the reds turn to go on the platform

I run with such force.

Jump on to the springboard.

Challenging myself to land on my feet.

I leap onto the leather platform:

Crash, bang go my shins against the bar.

I cry out in pain

APPENDIX A.

Material supplied to teachers during in-service
course, October 1981.

CHILDREN WRITING A.

KAREN.

When we go on the crashmats, I run along the form
And then push off with my feet.
I curl like a comma in the air,
I land on my knees;
Then with a leap I land on the mat,
I do a jump to turn round and then
I do a backward roll.

When we go on the magnificent climbing frame,
On the ropes I swing.
Then on the hoops I turn upside down.
Now it's the end of our P.E. Lesson:
I'm tired out.

APPENDIX A.

CHILDREN WRITING B.

RACHEL.

The activity, the enjoyment of being able to take part;
Grasping the bench ready for a forward roll,
and falling slowly and gracefully into the movement of it.
Then you firmly grasp the bench and roll over,
then the star jump from the highest leather platform,
arms opened wide and straight and legs stretching,
then landing,
bending my legs like a metal spring
Standing in a straight poised position.
Then the crash mats, the speed of run along the platform,
the spring into the air and turn,
then the force behind the land.
I jump from the springboard with ease and the
effort to get onto the platform to do a graceful arched
sequence then,
I jump with a firm landing.

CHILDREN WRITING C.

JAMES.

On the frame I feel safe with the soft cosy mats under me.
I am at the top, the very top. I feel very scared.
Then I pluck up my courage. Then I jump, My stomach
comes to my mouth. It is a funny feeling. Then bang I
lie on the cosy mat.' Lying there I think of many things.
'Get off the mat', says lucky. I get off the mat with a
leap and a turn. Then I go to my other favourite apparatus.
I run to the springboard and leap on it hard, too hard
I can tell you. I went right over the springboard with
the greatest of ease.

APPENDIX A.

CHILDREN WRITING. D.

JULIE

Balancing, falling, stretching, relaxed,
Limbs swiftly gripping;
Slowly touching the poised floor.
Twisting, running, pushing, bending, jumping,
A yellow flash, a sudden jerk,
A dent in the crash mat;
Stopping still,
Running, leaping, on the top of a leather horse,
A roll, a twist to stand still.
Thick, still twisting rope
Grasping using energy,
Then fall.
The challenge of the wall bars;
The benches need the power of force
Clinging by all limbs,
Desperate to reach the end,
Thud!
Flying free as a bird,
Unfolding as if a parcel,
Turning like a rolling dog,
Releasing from the holding.
Once again the room is silent.
No more activity.
Still as a statue.

APPENDIX A.

CHILDREN WRITING. E.

ANNA.

Into the P.E. hall we walk.
Not allowed to run or talk.
When I get into the hall
I stamp, jump up, and out I bawl.
I run and jump and climb and swing,
But the others don't do anything.
They stand around and look at me
For Mrs. Cowley's mad at me.
I have to sit upon the floor
While Mrs. Cowley shuts the door.
I see others run around the room,
Carl Rowlands comes past, zoom, zoom,
I see Rachel run to the crash mat.
She flings herself forward through the air.
She does a forward roll and runs back,
The others stretch and bend and curl,
Wriggle under or on top of things,
Or crouch down, arched, and try balancing.
They all jump and leap around,
Then Mrs. Cowley says, 'Stop' and then
we get changed and go back to the classroom.

CHILDREN WRITING. F.

First I was on the mats,
Rolling and twisting, using my limbs,
Swinging my arms, lifting my legs.
Then I move to the wall bars and climb to the top.
I jump down flat on my back, there's a big smash.
John climbs up and does the same.
I move on to the rope; when I move it squeaks.
I go on the exercise rings and bang on the wall.
I climb up the rope but then I fall.
I run round to the bars and wait for the word.
I'm crouching while I wait for my turn.
Eventually I get there I spring up like a rabbit,
and then Mrs. Cowley shouts,
'Change. Sorry, it's time, line up boys.'

CHILDREN WRITING G.

DAVID.

In P.E. we twist and turn, especially on the ropes.
From the top bars, we leap down and slap
down on the plastic covered mats.
We run along the wooden beams, then try
a somersault; we come down on our backs,
and come to a sudden halt. Then we stand
rigid and run back to the line again.
On the rings we turn upside down and
come the right way again. On the mats
we try a hand-stand; we throw up our legs
and flop over on our backs.
I do not like the wall bars much, because

APPENDIX A.

CHILDREN WRITING G.

DAVID

I sometimes slip off the bars;
On the ropes when I climb up them, I slide
down, whoosh, and burn my hands,
so now I stick to swinging on them.

APPENDIX A. The Semantic Differential.

Please identify the piece of writing by letter A,B,C,D,E,F, or G.

You are asked to make judgements about seven written exercises by rating each piece on each pair of adjectives. For the pair

good 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ bad

the spaces may be described as

1 very good, 2 rather good, 3 neither, 4 rather bad, 5 very bad.

Distinguish as carefully as you can, and tick one space between each pair of adjectives. Trust your first impressions and work quickly.

intelligent	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	dull
naive	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	sophisticated
knowledgeable	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	ignorant
innovating	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	imitative
original	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	stereotype
prosaic	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	poetic
direct	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	figurative
interesting	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	boring
terse	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	verbose
enthusiastic	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	indifferent
hesitant	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	confident
urgent	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	nonchalant
extravagant	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	economical
sensitive	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	insensitive
precise	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	vague
spurious	1 ___	2 ___	3 ___	4 ___	5 ___	authentic

Thank you for your co-operation

Please use this space to make any extra comments, if you wish.

APPENDIX A.

TRANSCRIPT OF TAPE RECORDING OF INTRODUCTION TO CHILDREN WRITING.

(The children were a class of 23 ten year olds. They were aware of the microphone, and had heard a recording of themselves talking about some photographs taken during a P.E. lesson. As words were suggested, they were written on the blackboard).

Teacher: Now children, - you are quiet, aren't you? - er, you've been looking at the pictures about P.E. You've just had a P.E. lesson, and that is what I want you to write about. I want you to write about physical activity, about moving, about making your body do things. I want you to try and put it into a picture. Now those are pictures, made up out of shapes and colours, and you're going to make your picture out of ---

Child: Poetry.

T: Yes, and poetry is made up out of ---

C: Words.

T: Words, yes. So before we start let's collect some words together which will help us. First of all I want you to think of any words that will help you say the different things to do. Think of all the different parts of you that move when you have a P.E. lesson, and tell me some of the words that you're going to use for that. Yes. Anna?

C: Limbs.

T: Limbs. That's one of the things that you actually move. Some words will be about what you move, some words will be about how you move. Ruhul?

C: Legs.

T: Legs. That's one of the things that you move. Legs and Limbs. They are things. It's still a leg if you're standing still. We want words which bring movement into our picture. Rachel.

APPENDIX A.

TRANSCRIPT OF TAPE RECORDING OF INTRODUCTION TO CHILDREN WRITING.

C: Muscle.

T: A muscle, yes; those muscles are still not moving. They are just as stationary as the ones in that picture. How does that picture get movement in it? How can you get movement into your words? On one of the pictures the boys are just sitting, and they're still, but in the other pictures they are in different shapes. You've got to put these limbs and legs and muscles into different attitudes. You've got to get them moving before you can get a picture, with a message of movement. Karen.

C: Stretching

T: Stretching, good; --- and James?

C: Sight

T: Do you use your sight, when you're doing P.E.? How do you use it?

C: Well, you've got to see what you're going to do.

T: Yes, and that means that you have got to look carefully, and judge. I'm going to put 'sight' there --- but I would like a word which tells me something about when you move. All right; your sight is going to help you decide how to do it; but it's not going to tell me where, or how you feel, in P.E. Yes, Julie.

C: Um, bending.

T: Bending, yes --- and Karen?

C: backward roll.

T: That's the name of a thing that you do; --- but when you do the backward roll, do you just roll? What else do you do? What do you make your spine do? your hands do? your feet do? Think of all the different pieces of you, the different ways

APPENDIX A.

TRANSCRIPT

they are moving. Howard?

C: Um, um, y'brain; 'cos it gives you more ideas.

T: Yes, you have to have ideas, and think about what you're doing when I ask you to make a sequence, but please tell me some words to describe your sequence and what you are doing. Yes, Shaney.

C: Crouching.

T: Good. I like that. It has a good 'crouch' sound to it, and as if your're trying to do something, and putting effort into it. Good. Kathryn?

C: Running.

T: Running, yes; --- and Sheila?

C: Arch.

T: Good --- and Andrea?

C: Curved.

T: Good; arched spines, curved spines.

C: Swiftly.

T: Yes, we do do things swiftly; but what do we do swiftly?

C: Run along the bench.

T: Yes, rolling, --- you can put 'bench' in the things because you're bound to use some 'thing' words. I think that our movement words list is going to have to be much longer if you're going to get a good picture. Rachel?

C: Relax.

T: Yes; very good, because when you have that you're getting a contrast. She's going to have the tight tension of the crouching and the bending and the stretching and then contrast in 'relax', and I've told you before you can make your writing

APPENDIX A.

TRANSCRIPT.

- T: much more interesting if you have contrast in it; have one idea and then have something which is the opposite of it in the same writing. Yes, Gemma?
- C: Balancing.
- T: Good. That is another quieter, stiller one; but there's still tension in it. You have to try to think, with your brain, as Howard said, and concentrate, concentration to get what you want, out of your limbs, out of your legs, your muscles, yes, Shaney.
- C: Jumping.
- T: Yes. --- What do we call somebody who is very skilled in making their limbs do what they want them to? Julie.
- C: A gymnast.
- T: A gymnast or an ---
- C: An athlete.
- T: An athlete, yes; athlete is, um a word with a - a graceful sound. There's another word you use to describe somebody who is graceful, and skilful in gymnastics beginning with 'l'. ---
- C: No --- no.
- T: Well, it's one to try. A lithe person is someone who can do the movements that you admire, and do them gracefully. 'Lithe' means 'supple' as well as graceful. --- Yes, Andy.
- C: You have to be fit to be lithe.
- T: You do indeed, and you can have 'fit' in your list. 'Fit' is a small, quick little word. 'Fitness' is a longer, more important word. When you're writing make sure you choose the one you want. 'Fit' would be to describe something. 'Fitness' is the condition. Make sure you choose the right one. Yes?

APPENDIX A.

TRANSCRIPT.

C: Bounce.

T: Yes --- I remember a lady, she was a teacher, whose daughter was at a P.E. college, training to be a teacher, of P.E. especially; and she brought in a photograph of these girls, a class of students, and I couldn't help noticing, the first thing I thought when I saw the photograph was how beautiful they were. Each of the girls was very lovely to look at, and I said to her, this was some time ago but I remember because it struck me; 'Health is beauty.' They were all very good at gymnastics, and games, and that kind of thing, all very healthy, and they were all beautiful. If you can command your body, to do the things you want it to; if you're healthy enough to do that, then you are usually a very fit person. --- Yes?

C: Pushing on the ropes, pushing them.

T: Yes, you do push; --- and twist. What about a contribution from Andrew?

C: Judge?

T: We've had judgement compared, concerned with sight; but you do have to make judgements. But if you're going to make a picture of what you're going to do in P.E. you'll have to mention things you see ---

C: Grasping.

T: Grasping; good, We've had very little, very few words to do with the hands; --- grasping, gripping, sliding (as children say these) kneeling --- a lovely word 'poised'. Who knows what 'poised' means? Rachel.

C: Is it kind of stopped still?

T: Yes, and ready. Now some people have still got their hands up. Ruhul?

APPENDIX A.

TRANSCRIPT.

C: Round.

T: That's in our things, yes. You would ---

C: I said 'round' not 'ground'

T: Round, yes, as in curves and arch and rounded; that kind of word?

C: Yes.

T: Yes Rachel?

C: We move lightly.

T: Lightly. Good. Yes. --- Now you will need some round words, and some colour words. I'm not going to put these on the blackboard because you will very easily, I will warn you now, get too many. Thus, slap on the crashmat, bump. One lovely one this morning: I was listening particularly; the creak of the ropes on the top part, a lovely little squeak, when you use the ropes. It's not those noise words that are going to give you as much success in bringing the P.E. lesson on to your piece of paper as those words about form and shape: and what you're actually doing. It's the movement words that will make it into a P.E. lesson. It's not the group photograph which has got movement in. You've got to catch somebody actually turning and twisting --- or leaping ---.

October 1982.

Focused holistic scoring applied to writing about a poster.

GREENHALGH. C. AND TOWNSEND D. (1981) Language Arts Vol.58 No 7.Oct.p811.

Descriptions of score points

0. These papers are not scoreable because they are blank or fail in other ways to respond to the assignment.
1. Papers which attempt to address the topic but do so in a manner that does not demonstrate success with the task.
 - (a) A story which mentions a strange planet, but no detail which can be identified in the picture is mentioned.
 - (b) a list of objects in the picture, named but not described or connected imaginatively.
 - (c) there is evidence from single words that the picture has been seen, but the syntax is too confused to constitute a coherent response.
2. Papers that respond to the task in a 'skeletal' or inconsistent way.
 - (a) items in the picture are named with minimal description of appearance or juxtaposition.
 - (b) most of the comment is extraneous, or a narrative begun which relates to one feature of the picture isolated from the rest.
 - (c) no emotional response at all, no preference indicated.
3. Papers which show an effective response that brings a part of whole of the picture to mind, visually and involves personal reaction.
 - (a) specific detail seen in the picture.
 - (b) primitive attempt to isolate abnormalities.
 - (c) interaction between items in the picture imagined but not developed
 - (d) vocabulary is ordinary and used prosaically
 - (e) rhyming, if attempted, at war with sense and general purpose.

APPENDIX B.

4. Papers at this level are more elaborate in description and reaction, and more organized in thought and structure.

- (a) evidence of a noticing eye for shape and colour.
- (b) comparing and contrasting in order to describe in an inventive way.
- (c) successful evocating of the alien atmosphere, by description of the picture or describing personal response; exploration of the landscape in the writer's imagination.
- (d) organization of phrases into rhythmic units; rhyme, if used, a asset.
- (e) adventurous or more mature vocabulary.

APPENDIX B.

ALAN.

I was on a bike ride on my own
and I got lost.

I seen this large building I got off my bike.

I looked inside the first thing I seen was the big
stone pillars.

They was about 30 foot high.

The next thing I seen was a crashed
U.F.O.

It was crashed and bent like a fifty pence piece.

It had a snapped aerial.

And broken windows and cracks.

I walked over the bridge my foot
went through I pulled it out.

There was water running underneath.

Then blood started coming through.

Then I seen like a small shark.

Then I seen somebody being thrown off a ledge.

And there was blood on the floor.

Then they climbed down.

And scraped him up.

APPENDIX B.

AMANDA.

An Invasion.

As the mist rises higher it all becomes more clearer

And everything seem to be nearer

A bright light shines upon the church

Suddenly I cannot see

The bright light has blinded me.

All I can hear is a buzzing noise

I strain to open my eyes

A giant metal object lies

Against the solid pillow

Strange people emerge

I keep quiet behing my rock

Scared to peep beyond

Hoping these people will go

A dragon seems to be their pet

And the water is under control.

APPENDIX B.

HELEN

The island Dragonite.

Dragonite is an island in the Atlantic Ocean with only wizards living on, and a dragon which guards the island. Some space men have landed on it and the wizards are escaping in an aeroplane which they came in 1000 of years ago. The dragon has been left behind. The space men are trying to find the wizards powerful books which contain lots of important spells. A space woman is trying to bribe the dragon to tell him where the spells are. The space men explore all the places where the wizards make their spells but the books are not there. The church is built in memory of the first wizards to land on 'Dragonite'. The space mens space ship is shaped like a fried egg with coloured tiles over. The spell books are hidden in a safe in a cave at the back of the waterfall which is guarded by a gate which the dragon guards. The ladder leads to where the wizards' sleep and eat. About 10 wizards stay behind because they could not fit in the aeroplane.

JULIA.

A church thats in ruins	A space vehicle's parked
Surrounded by space	Beside an arch
Hundreds of space men	A ship's setting off
All over the place	Into the dark
All dressed in silver	A church is shining
From head to toe	Under a beam of light
A dragons beside them	Never have I seen
Fire he doth blow	A more beautiful sight.

APPENDIX B.

DAVID.

A Martian Land.

1. A weird land, with tall pillars,
Someone is leaping through the window
Glass is shattering, sharp jagged spikes going everywhere,
Men rushing up and down ladders.
Outside this great dome, a UFO goes flying into outer space
Through an arch, another UFO is sighted,
A large circular dome, a great beam of light
emitted as it lands.

A Martian Land.

2. A little bridge, a shield leaning against a pillar
Nearby, an old hag-like monster crouches on a stone.
Looking at an enormous, hissing, spitting dragon,
With great, bat-like sharp wings.
3. Beneath this UFO, a little church,
with a keep-like tower,
Near the ladders, a group of wizards like people are talking,
Their tall, spiky hats standing high.
Underneath the bridge, a sparkling, wet waterfall,
The white spray flying high.

APPENDIX B.

CLAIRE.

The mist had cleared
And everywhere was visible again.
The shelter looks like it had been a church.
Are my eyes deceiving me?
No, there are weird people standing there.
All I can see are blinding lights,
All I can hear is people talking.
A dragon is lying on the floor
Surrounded by skulls and bones.
An old man is sitting on a rock
as if he had been dead for hours.
It's a small world.

ANDREW.

Space in the Pillars
The tranquil, undisturbed pillars
echoed the sound of the rocket landing.
Shadowed pillars shuddered.
Men started sending their craft.
Spirits of long ago people watched.
The body of the old man watched,
ghostly white, ragged clothed,
alive and dead.
The robed watched
Old dragon, moved his wings.

APPENDIX B.

DANIEL. The marble mass towering high,
 sticking out beyond the sky.
 Masses of pillars with ivy green
 stretching across the metallic beam.

 The men are jumping in daring feats
 to land above the space-like street.
 The ragged figure sits on a chest
 to see the space men doing their best.

 The massive archways with tinted glass
 lying on the dark green grass.
 The little stream tricklying by
 while the space men feeds the dragon sly.

IAN. Like a large church with beams that are tall
 Like people they walk around.
 Large dragons and people like zombies
 People falling through windows,
 Glass flying everywhere
 and large spacecraft flying about.

MARK. The weird people.

 On the hill a space ship lands two men climb out. Some
 weird people come to this metal ship. Other UFO crashed
 in this weird place people kill each other.

 Other people are murdered by people pushing them off
 high places and throwing them through windows feeding them
 to the dragons and other people are kind and gentle and
 care for others especially the leader.

APPENDIX B.

LEIGH.

The secret garden.

I'm in a garden

There's coloured glass windows

I see some space ship coming down

Flying saucers with their bright lights

One has landed next to a church

People are coming out

They are getting closer

there is one on a rock

on stone pillars there are marble statues standing up tall

then I see some goblins they are very small

On a chest there is a witch

her face is white and her eyes glare at you

she wears a black cloak

all made of rags

She watches a waterfall

there are ghosts with white hats

There are tall trees towering above me all nobbly

There is a dragon with smoke and fire coming out of his mouth

He has scales on his back green orange and brown

his wings are big and colourful

His eyes stare at you

His tail is very long

and it shines silver and gold

he looks very old.

APPENDIX B.

SIMON.

Is this Earth?

What's that in the distance?

I've never seen it before,

Is it a church?

Could I be imagining it?

I'm not imagining it,

This is a church I'm in

The atmosphere is terrific

This is a very terrifying experience

I'm standing in an invasion of the future and past

The creatures are blue with blood pouring down,

The nails are claw like

One has flesh in his teeth

Are they Zombies?

A rocket is docked an alien is coming out

A buzzing in my ears a smash of glass

A thump another crash of glass

I cry is this Earth?

APPENDIX C.

Personal statement : Mrs J Bulmer, Woodfield Middle School

Why do we ask children to write imaginatively/poetically/creatively?

What kind of results do we expect?

Writing is a mixture of two things. It is a skill and it is an art form.

By a skill, we mean that there are correct ways of working which can be learnt.

By an art, we mean that some people have a special gift for writing which is something inborn which cannot be learnt.

Writing music is similar in many ways. Before we start to write music we must learn about bars, notes, instruments and time signatures. This is the skill of writing music which even Beethoven had to learn. But Beethoven had musical imagination and musical ideas which nobody could teach him and it was this which distinguished him from other composers.

The skilled writer, therefore, can always make the most of his ideas but someone who is untrained and unskilled cannot do this. Whatever we write down on paper needs ideas, good description, credibility, correct use of words, proper sentences and paragraphs. We need to build up a lively and interesting style which will hold the interest of the person who is reading what we have written down.

We ask children to write because we know that children love to master a skill, particularly between 7 and 11 when mastery of as many skills as possible is uppermost in their minds. Writing involves the use of more conventions than does speaking because it lacks the variety of voice inflexion. This has led to the establishment of certain rules in written English.

These rules may alter slightly from time to time but they are sufficiently

APPENDIX C.

established to make their correct use a social asset. So we ask our children to write in a way which is generally acceptable.

We ask children to write imaginatively, poetically, creatively, when we want them to express their feelings, emotions, ideas and personal views of life and living. We want our children to be able to express themselves as individuals.

APPENDIX C.

Personal statement J.B.

If the teachers in the primary school provide sufficient motivation then children should regard their creative writing as worth while and purposeful. Children need constant encouragement and as little discouragement as possible. Most children are anxious to do the right thing if they are treated sympathetically and with understanding. In this way children can be encouraged to write in their spare time as well as in school.

Obviously the best way to learn to write is by writing:

Is it possible/necessary to assess creative writing?

Has practice and experience changed your method of marking?

How does one creative writing session affect your approach to the next session with the same group?

I am extremely tactful about correcting children's work. To my mind there is no point in covering a page of work with red pencil as this can be soul-destroying. I must admit that I temper my correction of mistakes according to my knowledge of the individual child. I think that children should be helped to look critically at their own work and to sort out ways of improving it. Always on the teacher's part the emphasis should be on stressing the good rather than the bad.

My approach to my next session with the same group would be developmental, building up on what went before.

For much of its primary school life a child is concerned with gaining experience of all kinds and it is only when he has sufficient experience that a child can interest himself in understanding a structure or a pattern. Children who have been writing fluently for some time are ready

APPENDIX C.

to be helped to sort out such rules as there are in English. Programmed learning can help here. It has a lot to offer, doing this kind of work efficiently and according to individual need.

Finally, I feel that children need a rough book in which to write down their ideas, improve upon them and correct them. Children should be trained into making a series of checks for themselves:

1. Read your work through, looking for missing full stops and capital letter.
2. Underline any word you are doubtful about. Look it up in the dictionary or your own word book.
3. Look for places where you could have expressed yourself in a better way. Can you think of better words to use? Have you said anything unnecessary? Have you said anything twice over?

Some errors in this week's work may be the basis for individual work programming next week. In this way children can spend the time learning the correct way of doing things.

It is most valuable for the teacher to go through the work with the child at her side. In a large class, of course, this cannot always be done but we must, I feel, keep giving help regularly to the children who need it most and getting round gradually to the rest of the class.

All our children are individuals and we must always appreciate their efforts at expression in every way and work together. It is so stimulating to look at the world through the eyes of a child again: There is so much we can learn from each other when it comes to creative writing.

When we say we have enjoyed a piece of work, poetry or prose, and found it moving, humorous or beautiful, then I suppose in a way in our minds we have assessed it.

APPENDIX C.

Personal statement : Mr J M Carruthers, Deputy Headteacher, Tarporley
C.E. Primary School.

Why do we ask children to write?

Every person needs some form of self-expression especially in a time where automation means people having much more leisure time etc. There is going to be a great need for creative people. Prose and poetry are creative forms at which many people achieve some form of success. It could be argued that it is a form available to all, whereas music and art, to quote two examples, may be regarded as a narrower field.

Through writing children are able to communicate their ideas and would hopefully find it a rewarding occupation. Writing may require children to use their senses; listening, observing, touching. They may be required to make judgements. Writing encourages deep thought about and sensitivity to, a variety of subjects. It involves a recall of experiences, and an extension of appreciation of things. Writing may encourage a deeper understanding of the subjects under review.

It should lead children to use language of a more expressive quality and increase their range of vocabulary. It can involve a discussion before writing begins - choice of words, ways of approaching subjects, situations, human character or characters, creation of atmosphere, organization of material into a plot or orderly form. Poetry especially encourages economy of language.

Creative writing will also test a pupil's skill in written English in the grammatical sense. (not a very high priority in my evaluations of the subject.)

APPENDIX C.

Personal statement J.M.C.

What do we do with the children's writing?

If creative writing is a personal matter then I feel the teacher should respect the choice of language made by the child as far as possible.

A child may not always agree with a teacher over the choice of suitable words to illustrate a required situation. This does not preclude the teacher showing the child where themes would have been better extended or curtailed. Because creative writing is a personal matter too much criticism can be counter-productive. I would regard errors in spelling and punctuation to be secondary to the quality of the content, especially if no real attention was to be given to some sort of learning by mistakes afterwards. Any verbal or written comments should be, as far as possible, encouraging to the child.

A child's personal ability should be kept in mind and I would want to see every member of a class at some time or other have a piece of work, rewritten after some correction, displayed in a classroom as a form of appreciation of effort, skill, etc. Children should also be invited to read out aloud to the class their creative writing.

Assessing creative writing

Assessing creative writing is difficult. It is such a subjective issue both for the child and teacher. Individual I.Q.'s are also involved.

Children with high I.Q.'s can be poor when writing imaginatively.

Personally, I have a preference for work written in poetic style rather than prose. A teacher may not be receptive to creative writing. A standardized approach to assessing creative writing would seem to be a difficult task. As far as assessment being necessary goes, I would think that a teacher should try to assess a piece of work as being good or bad for each individual child.

APPENDIX C.

Personal statement J.M.C.

I have always considered myself as a teacher interested in creative writing, and through experience I have widened my approach to the subject. However, on the subject of marking I would say that the only change I have made in my marking of creative writing has been a less rigorous attack on grammar and spelling content.

The kind of results I expect are largely geared to intelligence and reading ability, though not always so. Generally those in the class with a good reading age produce the best pieces of work, usually because they read many books inside and outside school. I have found it a mistake to write off poor pupils especially when writing in blank verse. I have often read poems of children of low I.Q.'s which have, in spite of a poor visual appearance, some imaginative worth. These children may lack the fluency of their abler peers but as a result often write with a well chosen economy of words which can have quite a dramatic effect. Their vocabulary may be limited and heavily dependent on suggestions made during the lesson. However, the very fact that they are unable to write extensively seems to help them produce something well worth reading.

I do not necessarily expect the less able pupils to produce the poorest pieces of writing. The average and above average children can be expected to produce something of a better linguistic content, if not of more interest. I expect a large number of discussed words and/or phrases/ideas to be present, sometimes originally used but more often incorporated as discussed. I find very few pupils are able to write an interesting story of reasonable length. Those starting off well and developing a length of several pages usually tail off as the child's concentration slackens. This is one reason why I prefer to use a poetic form. I like to encourage children to produce written work with a high standard of grammatical accuracy, but I expect this to be lacking in most pieces of work.

APPENDIX C.

Personal statement J.M.C.

At the start of a new school year I like to begin creative writing with reference to the senses, sight, sound, touch, taste, smell and proceed to emotions like fear, excitement etc., From this work I can gather a wide knowledge of the variety of experience enjoyed by the children in their lives. From this information I can then go on to plan where I feel response might be lacking and try to introduce direct stimulus where possible.

I have found that the children in Tarporley have on the whole a wide range of experiences gained from fortunate home life and direct experiences are not as important as they were when I was in Ellesmere Port. Most children in Tarporley, for example, have enjoyed holidays in different types of countryside and have visited places like castles church etc., whereas in poorer areas this is not always the case.

Most children need help with vocabulary right through their time in school and this is a feature of most lessons. Top juniors should be capable of being taught the use of techniques which will enhance their writing e.g. alliteration, onomatopoeia. This will require constant repetition.

APPENDIX C.

Personal statement : Mr Richard Evans, teacher in secondary school

Why do we ask children to write imaginatively/poetically/creatively?

In an attempt to extend their experience to allow them to enter into a different world of the imagination. It also allows them, through entering into a closer relationship with the imaginings, to make tentative, exploratory observations about the world around them. Through entering and meeting the world of myth in imaginative writing pupils can work out personal fantasies and eventually arrive at a closer understanding of their own personal role in the world. By considering the way in which different characters will act in a number of different experiential situations pupils can experiment with ways of coping with the world. By this I mean that a more sensitive awareness of problems and possible solutions can be generated by encouraging pupils to enter into a different role and to explore the possibilities inherent in it.

What kind of results do we expect?

The type of results vary with age, experience, maturity, ability and the previous learning experiences controlled by the teacher - O.K. so what? I expect some sort of genuine response to the stimulus than I present. This may take any form - the essential ingredient being a willingness to communicate some form of meaningful response - whatever form this may be.

What do we do with the children's writing?

Correction will depend entirely on the purpose of the writing. Consequently, not every error will be marked - only the errors I linked to writing purpose. e.g. if intention is to promote effective use of adjectives, credit will be given for the genuine attempt to do this, therefore less attention to poor spelling/expression might be accepted. Certainly in

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Personal statement R.E.

appreciating whether the purpose of the writing has been achieved efforts will be made to give more credit for this than creating an inhibiting effect by over-marking mechanical errors. Sympathetic response to pupils' ideas should be encouraged - important not to set up negative feelings of failure even if work is not particularly good - even the worst kind of writing has some good points (even this!)

Is it possible/necessary to assess creative writing?

Assessment can take many forms. It can be a mechanical correction of errors as well as a response to an imaginative piece of writing. It is necessary to make some form of evaluation about how the pupils are developing in their writing, therefore a system which incorporates the assessments of a number of elements in writing is desirable. This might take the form of a skill development check-list, a profile or a comment which notes proficiency in a number of areas. It is important to understand whether a child appears to be mastering writing skills. In order to do this a form of assessment must take place. Even 'creative' writing is open to this form of evaluation and assessment although the developmental stages in a child's writing experience are open to question. However, some tentative assumptions can be made.

Has practice and experience changed your method of marking?

Experience has indicated the need to be sensitive of the risk the pupil has taken in committing ideas/emotions to paper. Respect for a personal response is vital. Without this the relationship of trust is eroded. I mark a piece of writing, keeping the reason for setting the writing firmly in my mind. Therefore, I will be marking different points in their writing depending on the set purpose. It is no use assaulting a piece of writing making attempts to highlight every mechanical error a

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child has made. No red biro - pencil is more constructive and more sympathetic!

How does one creative writing session affect your approach to the next session with the same group?

It will sensitise me to the success of the stimulus, needs of the group, necessity to change, expand or drop my line of enquiry and show me how to take the group further along a particular path. The group's response, indicating the success or failure of the material will be considered before next session. The product will often be used as a source of further stimulus for the group. I often find my pupils will respond in an interesting way to a piece of writing which has been produced by one of them. When writing poetry pupils often make progress by having clear examples of a type of poem in mind; they make tentative, exploratory steps, trying out ideas which they have seen used by another poet. This is a form of copying but a valid one as it can be the foundation from which a child can build his own way of writing; a form of imitation which can lead to proficiency in a type of writing.

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Personal statement : Mrs S Jones, assistant teacher in First School.

Diploma in the Teaching of Mathematics.

As you know, my expertise is in maths, but I am very interested in all forms of creativity and I think creative writing a subject of great importance.

Perhaps I had better clarify what I mean by creative writing. Children naturally speak creatively; with skilful help they will do so using a wide vocabulary and enquiring, informed minds. These are as essential to creative writing as is easy familiarity with spelling, handwriting and grammatical skills.

Creative writing will not only enable them to develop more fully as adults, but if well taught it achieves higher academic standards than regurgitating endless exercises ever would.

When we teach writing skills, e.g. spelling, new vocabulary, children listen and look, apparently learning and understanding. Frequently they rapidly forget. If a new skill is then applied creatively by the child it is usually well retained by them.

We are living in a time of turmoil and change, while some further trends such as more leisure time are predicted, but we cannot know accurately what the children's future will be. They will certainly need to be able to use academic skills with ease, have flexible minds and the ability to express themselves. Creative writing, well taught, achieves all these ends.

It is a widely held medical view that creativity is of sound therapeutic value to children who have emotional problems and/or who are socially disadvantaged. If creativity is restricted to crafts then the children helped are restricted to those with good manipulative skills. Nearly all

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children are able to learn the skills which enable them to write creatively.

One third of hospital patients are in psychiatric hospitals. In my opinion if the children we teach grow up able to express themselves with easy clarity this number would be decreased. Here creative writing is of obvious importance. It has given us new insights into the life-long problems of very severely handicapped people.

On the whole, teachers get the quality of work they expect. I expect my children to give me legible, decipherable, interesting, reasonably relevant, imaginative writing.

Personally I prefer quality to quantity and am delighted when I find glimpses of excellence from unexpected sources. The child who has been apparently disinterested in preliminary work occasionally achieves work showing a bright imaginative mind.

When I want a fair copy of corrected work to include in a topic book, anthology or display I expect it to be well written, correctly spelt and well set out. The child may choose whether to illustrate or decorate it. Both can improve good writing.

To let children churn out pages of 'creative writing' which are meaningless to them and unreadable by anyone else seems to me not only a waste of time but harmful, in that this is one of the causes of the present trend away from creative writing as typified in the views held by Rhodes Boyson.

Creative writing can be either prose or poetry. I read and discuss both equally well with my children. After teaching them the necessary skills I am happy for them to do either. I don't emphasize this but I find it implicit in my work. I usually find that 15% of the class choose to write poetry, the rest prose.

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When it is completed the children's work may be: read to the class, read and discussed in pairs, displayed in the classroom, made part of a wall display, included in a topic book or prose/poetry anthology, sent (with the child) to the headteacher or another member of staff for praise, or shown to parents.

I think it is very possible and vitally necessary to assess creative writing.

I used to correct every spelling and grammatical error in red and list them at the end to be rewritten. I now note them in my book, either as a basis for a class or group lesson. Sometimes I discuss and explain them with individual children.

My comment at the end of their writing starts with a compliment, if possible, and no more than two constructive suggestions or questions.

If children think that their work is ignored (this impression is given by a tick alone) they feel that the piece of work, and they themselves, have been devalued.

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Personal statement, Mrs G Kitchener. Headteacher. Infants

We ask children to write creatively in order to provide a vehicle for their creativity. A child may not be able to express his creativity as well in other creative media. Just as we teach the skills of drawing, painting, movement etc., we teach the skills necessary for written creative language.

The ability to participate in creative expression facilitates an ordering of the child's past experiences and allows the child to come to terms with new experiences and feelings.

Asking children to write creatively provides opportunities for the extension of the child's knowledge and use of the language because the vocabulary used for a 'creative' piece of work may differ from a piece of work where e.g. (i) precise scientific information is required (ii) directions or instructions are required. Other kinds of written work may involve only the intellect but creative expression involves the whole person. It is a focusing in depth on a particular thing or experience and it involves a search into deeper levels of personal consciousness.

Writing creatively allows the child to organize his own mental image of the world in his terms as opposed to set formal 'work card' language work. It helps the teacher to learn about the child and its development.

Writing creatively provides opportunities for the development of imagery which may not be presented with other kinds of language work.

When a child writes poetically (i.e. prose or poems) he is handling language again in a different way and the beauty of sound/rhythm/imagery will be used.

The creative process and the development of awareness are more important than the result. At infant level oral contributions are of great

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importance. Often young children do not have the physical skills to write what they are thinking because their academic and creative skills are more developed than their physical skills. Some cannot remember what they originally thought because the physical skill of handwriting demands most if not all of their concentration. Therefore individual oral contribution is important. The quality of their original thoughts and feelings may not show in written form so it would be unfair to make judgements just on written language.

Whenever possible a teacher reads a piece of written work immediately it is completed. Discussion will take place and comments made in the light of previous work and compared with the child's own previous contributions. The child may be asked, for example, what he thinks of it, was there anything he found difficult, what he particularly enjoyed.

Creative writing is sometimes used as part of a display. Sometimes pieces of work are read to a group or to the class. Discussions follow from this starting point. Opportunity is taken to make the child aware of his own progress in relation to what he has written on previous occasions. Other children in the group draw attention to what they particularly like in the piece of work.

A finished piece of creative writing might be written up and embellished as part of a child's own hand-made book or class book.

In considering a piece of work undue attention to spelling, grammar or form might destroy a piece of work. The general ethos depth of feeling and sensitivity of response would be more important. However recurring mistakes of spelling, syntax etc are noted and a comment like this might be made: 'I've noticed that you usually spell our like this - are-' You will need to use it lots of times again so we'd better work at getting it

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right'.

Over the years I have found that I use visible marks on paper far less. I have never given pieces of language work marks out of ten for example. I used to frequently tick but if I do mark a piece of work it is usually a written comment in a conversational mode.

It may ask the child something that he has to provide an answer for.

It is possible to assess creative writing. A spontaneous rather than a formal assessment is made when the piece of work is read. The whole ethos and response is usually the main consideration but attention is also paid to use of vocabulary, imagery, the skill of communicating thoughts or feelings in powerful/emotive/imaginative/new ways. It is essential to make this kind of assessment and to communicate with the child so that he is made aware of his own progress and development.

Other members of the group are made aware of these aspects either in their own work, peers work or the work of professional writers in order that it may contribute to their own development.

One creative language session will affect another according to the response. Generally speaking, the quality of the initial experience will ensure quality of response. However, certain elements may emerge which would be taken into account when planning the next creative language session.

- e.g.
1. Too much adult response in preceeding discussion
 2. Quality of experience lacking.
 3. Assignment given is inappropriate for level of intellectual/physical/creative/imaginative skills.
 4. Request is shown to be outside the range of their own experience.

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Often qualities or aspects in one child's piece of work may spark off interest in other directions which the children may wish to pursue in the next session.

Whenever creative writing is taking place, the works of poets, artists, craftsmen are used alongside if possible for inspiration and deeper awareness. They are considered necessary elements in the creative and visual environment of the child.

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Personal statement : S. Parry OU. Honours Graduate.

Creative Writing in the Junior/Middle School.

Why do we ask children to write/imaginatively/poetically/ creatively?

(a) By encouraging children to explore the 'inner word' of feeling and imagination we help them to develop emotionally and also to understand and come to terms with problems in their own lives and those around them.

(b) In order to communicate imaginative ideas they need to express themselves clearly, thus developing and extending their vocabulary and command of English.

(c) For most children this, and should be, a very enjoyable activity as well as involving hard work. By this means we can introduce them to the satisfaction provided by this creative process.

(d) This kind of writing offers an opportunity to literally 'express themselves' which is not often available in other subjects or forms of written work.

What kind of results do we expect?

(a) These will obviously vary according to age and ability and the stage of emotional development reached. However, at all stages we should be looking for original and authentic expression of the imaginative world of each individual child.

(b) We should expect the ideas to be expressed as carefully and skilfully as possible for each child, with evidence of a real effort to communicate clearly. This includes good presentation of the final produce which should only be produced after rough initial drafts have been made, corrected and improved by the child following discussion with the teacher.

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What do we do with the children's writing?

- (a) Firstly we should accept genuine written offering and provide a sympathetic audience.
- (b) Correction may be necessary for spelling, punctuation etc. Technical accuracy is important for clear communication but should not be seen by the children to be the major criterion when judging creating writing. Rough drafts enable the teacher to work with the child in order to suggest improvements in methods of expression.
- (c) Poems can be read aloud to the class or displayed on walls or in booklets. Good display, including appropriate illustrations, should be encouraged. Sometime, however, creative writing is very personal and such work may need to be kept strictly between teacher and pupil.
- (d) Good ideas can be further developed with help and encouragement.
- (e) Directing children to the work of other writers and similar themes to extend their awareness of the possibilities.

Is it necessary/possible to assess creative writing?

- (a) It is possible to assess subjectively from one's own personal response to the writing. I consider this by far the most valuable form of assessment since creative writing is concerned with communication at a personal level.
- (b) Objectively one could assess a piece of writing purely for technical skill if that is the main objective but this kind of assessment is more appropriate to formal modes of written work.
- (c) Analysis of writing such as suggested in 'Assessing Language

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Development' (Wilkinson 1980) would seem to have little relevance at primary level and is itself expressed so obscurely that it would seem to have little to offer as an encouragement for clarity in writing.

'Taking apart' a piece of creative writing in this way will add little to our understanding or appreciation of it or, in my view, enable us to help a child more effectively. Form and meaning (content and style) should not be divided into separate parts and there is a danger of doing this when using a structured approach to the analysis of creative writing.

Has practice changed my method of marking?

(a) Yes: at one time I often marked creative work by giving it a score but now prefer to comment on it verbally and/or in writing. Teachers are often advised to give two marks, one for style and one for content. This is surely wrong if the two aspects should be indivisible.

How does one creative writing session affect the approach to the next session with the same group?

(a) I would be guided by the initial interest and response when deciding whether or not to continue with the same theme or to change direction.

(b) A more formal language lesson might be desirable if certain technical faults are recurring within the group.

(c) Other literature or music, pictures etc. might be introduced to provide further stimuli and to extend development of the same theme.

(d) Some of the work produced in the previous lesson could be read aloud and discussed with the group.

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Can creative writing be taught?

Children can be equipped with the necessary tools for writing e.g. spelling, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary can be extended. They can also be introduced to prose and poetry of a high standard and encouraged to think about and express abstract as well as concrete themes. Beyond this I do not believe creative writing can be taught as mathematics or science or even formal English can be taught. Instead, the teacher can provide a stimulus, the necessary time and opportunity and, most important, a sympathetic and encouraging audience for creative writing.

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Personal statement : Mrs Irene Rawnsley, Head of Year, Hugh Gaitskell
Middle School. Leeds.

The sphere of creative writing enters the world of feeling which other language exercises rarely touch. It is important for children to be given the chance to write imaginatively in this way, thinking about subjective experience is given structure, and awareness develops about human experience in general.

Results. This is a difficult one. At first one tends to have low expectations. To ask a child to open his inner world to an adult he does not yet know or trust is asking too much. Later, once a mutual confidence has grown one expects an honest attempt at the task, but still bears in mind that human response to experience differs widely and that the struggle to put feeling and submerged thought into accessible language is one that has defeated many would be poets.

Correction - always positive. There are other areas of the English programme in which to insist on correct technique and spelling. I look through the work for things to praise - an unusual twinning of noun and adjective, an emotive word, any evidences of sincerity. My written comments sometimes become a dialogue between myself and the child - I write, he writes back, adds a little, changes a little. I have sessions when I offer the chance to children to read out work to the class and encourage more reticent children to share theirs also, but never without their consent.

Development occurs naturally during child/child, child/teacher discussions. Always I am feeding in - poems, stories, snippets, discussion so that the aims are not lost.

Some degree of assessment is necessary, only if the general style of teaching in the school directs it. It would be unfair to an imaginative

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child with a flair for expression if one never puts a grade or mark on his work if he lives in a school world where talents are acknowledged in this way.

However, having said this, I dislike grading a good story. The reward comes from the effort put in and the evident enjoyment of those who read it.

No, I don't think my method of marking has changed much over the years. I soon discovered that once a child knows his work is being valued as a piece of literature rather than an exercise to be assessed his motivation towards self expression increases vastly.

Regarding continuity between sessions I find myself following threads; I will read a poem and think 'That is another angle of what Pat in 3G was trying to say ---' then the poem will be shared.

Also if any area begins to frustrate me such as a tendency towards predictable imagery or a very safe approach to sentence structure I will choose material designed to correct this.

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Personal statement : Mrs Judith Sharman . Infant Teacher

If we consider that our purpose is to help children develop fully in all aspects of their education then this area must be one of the most vital that as teachers we are required to handle. Children are wonderfully uninhibited, they are what they imagine, they do not pretend. The importance of this creative side of personality cannot be stressed enough neither can its vulnerability.

The young child uses three main avenues to express his ideas - he tells them orally, acts them out and depicts them pictorially. All these should naturally lead on to a desire for a clearer and more permanent method of expression. The teacher's role must be to extend and improve these early means of expression and provide an environment conducive to development into the 'writing' channel.

The environment necessary for this is one in which the relevance of writing is portrayed in as many ways as possible - from hand written recipe cards for use in cooking sessions to personal letters sent to the children before they start school. There are countless other ways of showing this but one important factor is the provision of a writing corner. In infant classes this is easily accomplished in the organisation of furniture for working an integrated day. In junior schools even if a whole area of classroom space cannot be devoted at least a writing corner could consist of a table, noticeboard etc., where items could be stored and displayed. In each writing corner there should be :

- (a) different sizes, colours, types of paper.
- (b) different kinds of writing implement from thick felt tip pens to different coloured pencils.
- (c) wordbanks (made from Breakthrough project folders) and dictionaries.

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(d) 'idea' cards of pictures from magazines stuck with an optional vocabulary.

(e) cards on which different kinds of writing are set out from letter settings to haiku poetry.

As teachers we attempt to help the child develop skills that he can translate his ideas through all channels of expression but in writing this involves specifically giving him the skills necessary - letter formation, spelling, vocabulary etc., so as to facilitate both the creative and communicative processes. Correction of spelling letter formation and so on is necessary in order to make the writing available to others and so fulfil the communication aspect. Any work displayed should in my view be correct, copied out preferably by the child, when he is fresh, from the teacher's copy of his work. The cardinal rule in all evaluation of creative work is that on no account must the teacher write on or 'correct' imaginative writing just as she shouldn't draw or touch up a child's painting. Good work in this area will only occur if the teacher shows that she considers it to be important by allowing time for it. Time for the child to work at his own pace; time for her to read it in depth; time to discuss with the child and encourage him to reflect, refine and correct his work but always allowing him the courtesy and respect of the author. Another aspect of this respect is sensitivity to the child's wishes with regard to display or even the reading out of his work. Some children regard this as an invasion of their privacy, a breaking of trust in that some writing is personally very private and in sharing it with teacher they did not intend for it to be shared further.

The teacher's role in evaluating the child's work is a difficult one bearing as much as it does on the subjective. The following are, however, some of the questions that the teacher may find useful when

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assessing the child's written work:

- a) Is this piece of work a clear exposition of the child's original idea? Does it achieve what the child set out to achieve? If not is it an honest failure?
- b) Does the work show self discipline? Is the child developing the ability to evaluate his own efforts and ideas and can he reject the second rate?
- c) In reading the work through can the teacher see the personal aspects the things that make it specially individual?
- d) In assessing style and vocabulary can the teacher find any examples that show originality and vividness - this is particularly evident in the child's poetry - to discuss and comment.
- e) Finally and purposefully low on my order of priorities would come examples of errors that could be worked on. These must however be done in another book - with sensitivity and particularly bearing in mind that the purpose of imaginative writing is not to teach spelling and so on but to develop one of the most important areas of the child's personality and education.

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Personal statement : Mr Frank Skitt, former Primary School Headmaster.

Author of 'Themes for Language Learning'

By the 'creative writing' of Primary school children, I think we mean the writing they do as a distinctly personal, mainly subjective response to some aspect or aspects of their experience.

During the whole of my teaching career, ideas about this field of Primary school work, what our aims are and what kind of standards should be applied, have been changing. From writing in the creative mode I now want children to gain -

1. Recognition and clarification of their own ideas
2. The confidence to find and express their own distinctive 'voice' in writing.
3. Experience of a variety of strategies from which to select the appropriate one for any piece of writing.

I think that what used to be called 'style' is 'composition' or essay writing is irrelevant, really a false aim, in the Primary school. I think a regular once-a-week timetables session is too often and too arbitrary. I do not like 'Heads down - listen to this music - discuss (10 minutes) the picture it made in your minds - write about it.'

If it is to achieve its proper purpose as I understand this, I think this kind of writing should arise from experience, from whatever source, that has been mulled over, allowed to simmer for at least a few hours, talked about more or less at leisure; experience of course, that is seen to be in some way interest, exciting, worth while from the child's point of view. That is one part of the context it must have. The other part is that somebody really wants to know what the children have to say about their experience - really will value what is written as a valid and important view.

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So the first result I ask from creative writing is a view I can respect, because it is truly his own, of whatever the child is writing about.

When we start to consider results, marking, assessing and so on, I want to make a preliminary point. I think creative writing should be kept quite distinct from the important basic literary skills of reading, writing, spelling, punctuation and the art of clear, legible handwriting. A kind of creative writing is likely to happen when these skills are at a very immature stage, but there must be no confusion in the teacher's mind about what is the object of the work. The objectives in creative writing are very different from the objectives when the basic skills are being developed. I think this continues to be true until the basic skills are at quite a high level, and no longer the subject of regular, specific teaching.

In marking, from my early teaching days until near the end of my teaching career I was constantly questioning and adjusting my attitude, as I moved from 'Composition' (were you ever asked to write a 'model composition' for them to copy?) - as I moved from 'composition' as a literacy-teaching technique with a minimal creative element, to what I now understand as creative writing. Quite early I began to reduce the number of critical marks per 'composition', and to balance this with positive marking - ticks in the margin, which the children understood referred to particular credit items in their work. This move started me off also on a modest programme of discussion of the child's work, appreciation and occasionally something arising that was of wider interest.

In five years as a teaching head in a country school I first wiped out a 'daily diary' demand which had reduced the children to constant repetition of the same material, then started to work on (1) what an HMI once, when

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he saw them at work, called 'letting them soak themselves' in environmental material, (2) making less frequent demands for major written work of any kind, and (3) using the demands I did make, more as occasions of significance in our work and in our thinking together, than as occasions for judgement on them. I also used my opportunity as Head Teacher to introduce child-centered drama with movement etc., which lead to the writing down, occasionally, of small stretches of dialogue. What all of this did for the marking was to change the emphasis, stop making it a matter of judgement of him every time a child put his pen to paper, and start me towards looking (listening?) for a child's own authentic 'voice' in what was written.

I must mention here a long-term factor in my attitude to all children's work. Starting to teach at age 30, after 14 years of journalism and then wartime Army service, I was struck by the predominance of children's formal writing as the accepted means of their education and of assessment of their development, and the contrasting attitudes of outright hostility to their talk. I looked round for help, including help from books, and could find no coherent thinking about the use and encouragement of children's talk as an important part of their learning.

I now see talk - real two-way exchange of every kind with educated adults - as a necessary basis for positive literacy learning (skills), and in particular as the natural way of learning the grammar of the language. As for our present theme - creative writing- since this work is about children's experience and assessment of experience, their view of life, it has to be bedded deep in a vast pool of talk at many levels. The knowledge that this sort of writing was then going to be marked critically would, in my opinion, be enough to kill it before birth.

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In on-going development I look first, as you can see, for movement in the complex area of confidence/personal drive and motivation/involvement and commitment to their work/simple honesty of expression. Next I think is the 'strategy' aspect of the work. How has the child set about saying what he wants to say and what resources can he show me he has available. Does he choose exclamation, a simple cry, short two - or three word expressions? Or the simplest complex form, narrative? Or description, or a series of parallel points each throwing a light (e.g. in stances of a poem), or threat or challenge or complaint, or coolly organised argument with points building on each other, or intimate emotional appeal? And how successfully does he direct the chosen strategy to say what he wants to say and not, accidentally, something else? Perhaps we have something to learn about how to create the need for some of these strategies, and my book, I think, can represent me here.

In deciding what next, for me the theme given both unity and movement, and makes it possible to call different disciplines and drama, especially, into a coherent, complex, but whole experience.

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Interview with Mr Jack Cornall, Primary School Headteacher.

Q. Why do we ask children to write imaginatively, poetically, creatively?
Why do you include it in the curriculum?

A. Creative work is a means of expression for the child. We do in it movement, we do in in art, we do it in music. Naturally you need to write it down as well, and if you want to get the original thoughts of the child, which are more important then comprehension exercises or anything else, you've really got to ask them at some stage to write it down.

Q. What kind of results are you expecting?

A. Sometimes you'll be disappointed because you get stereotype answers, and other times you might get something special from particular children. Really you're looking for something creative. You're looking for something that's said in a way that's different to the way that anybody's ever said it before. It doesn't necessarily have to be grammatical but it's got to have a spark of something, a little bit of which is padding, although people do say that children are never original. They've never thought about it that way, even if thousands of other people have. For them it's an original thought. You're looking for new ways, different ways of saying things.

Q. How can you encourage originality, as opposed to cliches?

A. It's really a matter of how they put it down, in the first place. To start with, it's to be a workshop. It's not to be sitting there with an exercise book with a title, worrying about neatness. It's a matter of pouring thoughts down on to paper. And, only after they've been put down, the teacher needs to go to each individual child; looking at what the child's said, talking about how all those cliches can be removed. How could you say that in a different way? What could you say instead of that? Doesn't that sound a bit weak?

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And work on a one to one basis.

Q. And having got your results?.....

A. I wouldn't have results at this stage, we're talking about the first creative thought. We would have a rough draft, if you like, that's been altered by teacher and child, together. And then comes the writing down. Now, it could be in poetic form, it could be in story form, it could be just a series of random statements at this stage. Then you have to discuss how you're going to write it down and where you're going to write it down and whether it's appropriate to write it down.

Q. Would you make definite recommendations about the form?

A. I think in the early stages, no. Let the child write it down the way it wants to write it down. Then after two or three - it doesn't matter what age we're talking about here, we're talking about the form - after they've worked with you on two or three occasions, they know what sort of work you're expecting.

Q. How will they know what sort of work you're expecting?

A. Because this way you've been going about it, they've been given some form of stimulus and encouragement for writing. Then you've worked with the writing alongside the child. You've talked about it and made them feel that what the child says is important. And when they've got this feeling that they can write ...

Q. How will they know? What sign will you give the child?

A. Well, I would say, 'This is good', or 'I've really enjoyed reading this' and I'd write it on the bottom. 'This is a lovely piece of work'. Something like that.

Q. And that's all the child has to guide it, as to whether or not it's a good piece of work.

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A. Positive encouragement, yes.

Q. What about examples that the child sees, from published writers, other children?

A. One of the starting points, one of the stimulants, that you can use would be a poem. You could start with, say, 'Macavity the Mystery Cat', and with that one you'd get something rhythmic and rhyming. But if you started with 'Cats sleep anywhere. Any table, any chair', they haven't rhyme there and you get a different form. So if you're doing cats you might take 'Cats, Scat!' which is a lively, shouting one, with single or two words to a line. So you'd have, say, three different types of poem about cats.

Q. And you would put forms before the child?

A. Yes. And let them work on their own experiences of a cat. You might start them writing about the cats without the poems and then bring them in later. It depends which way round you wanted to do it. But then how do you measure their achievement? Well you'd sort of

Q. I haven't asked you that yet. I've only said how would you let the child know, when it's done a good piece of work.

A. Well, not every piece of work will be read out to the class. You might pick some bits of work from different children and read them out, or you might ask three or four children, because you liked them so much, to read their own piece out. Obviously you make sure you never pick the same people all the time, you spread it around. And then some pieces of work would be displayed, the best pieces, and they may well not just be poems or pieces of writing. There could well be pictures or pieces of writing that other children have done so we're spreading it out into the whole range.

Q. Do you, in your school, display finished adult pieces as well as the children's work?

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A. Yes, sometimes, yes. Not every time. Occasionally.

Q. Do you ever have a visiting poet to your school?

A. We haven't actually had visiting poets in the school, but we have been a number of times to big book exhibitions in Shrewsbury where four or five people have been present. It's more economic for a school of our size for us to go to them, than them to come to us. We've certainly had local people who are very good at reading poetry, with drama training, reading to our children, and in fact that's one of the things I want to do much more in the future is bringing in good voices to do performances in the school.

Q. Have your methods of marking changed?

A. I've never used any form of graded assessment, not ever. Only in mathematics, and never in any other subject although my first head, in Cheshire, insisted that I did, I said, 'I can't.' And I never felt that I could because that's measuring a child against its last piece of work, that is a different measure than measuring an outside standard. And we're only talking in the juniors, in the primary school, children's beginnings in writing. We're only talking about where they start, and if we start grading them at this stage they're going to think they're a failure before they've even had a go at it.

Q. How do you keep your own personal standard of what is good?

How do you know that the best in your senior juniors in creative writing is really good?

A. I don't know I was puzzled about this the other day. The local secondary school does a little poetry booklet each term. The last one, I felt, was a much lower standard than previous years. I thought to myself 'Why'? There were two pieces of work in it from children from my own school, from the previous year. One of them, and it was probably the best piece of writing in this thing was by a girl who'd

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Interview with J.C.

said, 'I can't write poetry', all through primary school. And I'd said, 'Yes you can, love. You've made a beautiful job of it.' But in fact the piece she had written wasn't up to the standard of some of the pieces she'd written for us in primary school. And I was disappointed not to see work from a dozen other people whose work had been super. I can't say how - I find it very difficult to measure the achievements in creative writing from other schools. I think you get so personally involved.

Q. Do you feel you must know the child?

A. I certainly don't seem to be very turned on by things that other teachers offer me in the way of poetry and creative writing, the best their children have done, although they may be better than what mine are doing. The thing is, we've been doing it together, and we've been involved in an experience, and they're really just writing down that experience, and it's a bit special to all of you who were involved.

Q. Do you read poetry yourself?

A. Yes, and I read lots and lots of poetry to the children. So do two other members of staff, a great deal. And I do a lot of poems in assemblies. Occasionally, about once a month, I do a sort of entertainment on a Friday afternoon where I find half-a-dozen likely pieces, get members of staff to join me, and we perform then. Other times the children do the poetry session. We try to put a lot of input, not just of poetry but of lively writing, exerts form different things and displays of new books and materials.

Q. Now, the process of getting a finished piece of work.

A. I'm writing in a workshop situation basically where, after the stimulus, there's peace for twenty minutes or so when the children are very busy, trying to put down their ideas in their own way. Then there'll be a

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rush as the first ones come enthusiastically forward with their finished piece. You are then exceedingly busy for the next half-an-hour, helping children change things round, alter their work with suggestions: 'Do you think that would be better there?' 'Look, that piece scans, needs a little rhyme on the end. Don't you feel that that needs to be turned round and swopped? And between you you draw lines and diagrams. They go away, still on rough paper, to do a second draft. When looking at the second draft, you're then concentrating on whether the whole thing comes together, and trying to take things out of it, to pare it down to a marking piece. Then, having done a couple of roughs, you're ready to write it out. The normal method we've come to now is to write it out on good quality paper, with a pen, plain paper with lined sheet below it. Keeping towards the middle to that you can decorate it. We use a model a lot of the anthologies of poetry that are around, the work of children who have done poetry previously. When the piece is finished it can be put into a book of the children's own poems, or put up on display. Either way, it's kept. It's this refinement that takes the time. You can't really do it with a class of thirty, at one time, to expect a full creative lesson. It's impossible. You end up taking two thirds of the things home and you can't do poetry or creative work except by the side of the child. You've really got to organise your time so that these poetry inputs are done with small groups on a regular basis.

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Conversation with a poet. John Rayner, Chester. 18.12.82.

- Q. A person's instinctive way of setting down a piece of writing, and saying whether it's meant to be poetry.
- A. Instinctive is the only way. Immediately you get into the realms of pretension and intellect you miss something out. As far as I'm concerned I read anything, like a poem from a six-year-old child, a poem from you - I could read a poem by T.S. Eliot, and I have done, and lots of other famous poets. The only thing that ever mattered to me is whether it grips my spirit. It's got to grip me. If it doesn't grip me it's no good at all. And I don't care how famous a person is, there's got to be that sort of stabbing thing, a thing that goes direct to your soul, right through the layers of your intellect. That's the only thing, and that's the only thing I judge poetry on.
- Q. Do you think it is just the layers of your intellect, or perhaps the layers of your own experience?
- A. Now there you've got me going. No look, as far as I'm concerned ...
- Q. I'm thinking particularly of nature poetry, and love poetry, which are two very common experiences.
- A. Well, to me, I've never, for instance poetry in that past had to be written in a certain form of whatever, and a certain metre. It had to have a certain swing to it. It doesn't matter to me. Poetry to me is not even the way the thing arrives. It's more or less what it says, and it can be very badly out of touch with the sound of the words and everything, how they rhyme, how they rhythm, or how they get to you. It's your crystallized thoughts of what that person was actually thinking at the time. It's crystallization of some deep felt feeling which they've had exude to the surface, and put it in writing. And so really all this stuff about - like Uncle Joe (you wouldn't know him), he says my poetry's not like normal poetry, is it? And he means stuff like Rudyard Kipling and stuff of that kind which

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was published years ago, and of course it's not like that. It's the actual gem of the thought that goes into it. Now, I've got nothing against Rudyard Kipling or anyone else. If I read them I find a bit that I like, then that's it, nothing else matters. It's just like a spiritual concept. That's what matters to me more than anything else.

Q. I was terribly disappointed by his poetry.

A. Well, he was a Victorian poet, wasn't he. And a lot of Victorians although it's very well, I mean if you were an architect of poetry you'd say, 'Yes, that's very good. It's poetry,' and what not, and it flows together like a machine because it's there, properly.

Q. He wrote a poem about machines, actually. That's one of his best things, because his sense of rhythm and rhyme goes with machine.

A. Yes, well, I'm not interested. I can admire someone who writes a poem and they do it in perfect rhythm and rhyme. They can get it set inside a little box, O.K. but I far more admire a person who's got a really big feeling in themselves and they want to get it, no matter what.

Q. Do you think that they - I hesitate to use these words - Do you think the truth of that feeling is more important than the technique?

A. The truth of the feeling is what matters most, no matter how you can try and convey that feeling - that doesn't matter at all. The point is you've got something to say that really grips your soul, deep down, and you want to communicate it to other human being. O.K., that's it, that's what you want to get across. Now then, the technique, or the means by which you get that feeling across that you feel so desperately, a feeling that can wake you up at three o'clock in the morning and you can't go to sleep or whatever. You've got to get it down. That is far more important than the actual technique that you

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use. And that's full stop to it, I mean that's it.

APPENDIX C.

An account of a visit to the Menai Centre, Anglesey
by a group of sixty 10-11 year olds, September 1979.

It happened five weeks ago. The gorgeous display was taken down for half-term, but not disseminated. How could I part with the poem?

Between the trees, between the sandy hills,
Opening out to the stretching, curving beach;
White, curling, tiny sea-horses rolling in,
Quietly lapping against our wellies.
The brown bubbly seaweed covering small rocks.
Waiting to be trodden on;
Small crabs scuttling across dry sand
Quickly and quietly.
Grey slate gravestone, worn out by rain pelting down;
Winding paths passing the grey graves,
Trees beside, old, twisted and bent,
Leaning over graves as if to read them.

Laurie Heaps.

They were only just old enough to be there, but no child faltered at the corners of the long corridors. We lost our way, but they sailed confidently across vast oceans of crumpled beds and waves of stairs. How difficult it was not to run along the polished expanses, and who did not, at night time in bare feet, and hoping that the lights would stay on? It was such an adventure, from the first unbalanced, laden breakfast tray to the last late night, when, disco-drugged, everybody slept.

We used a diary format to provide the opportunity to write in expressive language about the day's events believing that this is an exercise which must preface organised transactional and poetic composition. The children had been able to enjoy their enthusiasm much more freely than usual, in noisy discussion out of doors, and reaching the response of an adult quickly

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An account of a visit to the Menai Centre, Anglesey.

and easily. The need to relate had lost some of its urgency. They responded to the first opportunity to use written words with the carefulness of gratitude. Each individual effort was meant to be read as a gift, designed to please in ways teachers understand; neat, correct, conservative, consecutive. Only an appeal for quantity produced some more untidy but less inhibited accounts.

I could not regret the tension which had produced a kind of excellence beyond ordinary classroom capacity, but these results were a pointed comment on the child's view of our values. You were not old enough, at ten years, to delight in the creation of ordered prose, although you may have begun to enjoy hearing it. Writing to please our audience was, and for most of us still is, the paramount motivation.

This does not explain the omissions. No one described the alarming visit of a bat to the dormitories and the stair well, although Sir caught it. There was no mention of sickness, of locked lavatories, but weariness was acceptable and memorable. There was a mass mention of the age of some rocks, one thousand million years, as if the inconceivable figure could in some way measure their inexpressible joy. Some children wrote in satisfying detail about the rules of new games, but were defeated by flowers that needed to be drawn. (One does not buy a flora without pictures). It was popular, and busily convincing, to describe how to make a rubbing of a gravestone inscription, to detail every meal, to list the hymns sung in chapel. Two other school parties were ignored, on paper. I asked later, in school, for accounts of the dramatic rescue of a boy who became stuck on some rocks; the response was willing, the results factual and flat.

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I believe that they could not express the emotional charge of the moment, but had lived for five days in such a devoted state of reception that all their living will be coloured by it, begetting sensitive phrases and acts of unselfishness. Asked to write poems, knowing what I praise, the subject 'Menai Magic' uncovered perception even in the football team.

Looking down the path through Newborough Forest at the
tall, mystic trees;

The steps down to the lighthouse, turning and swirling
up to the top;

The heat of the sun's rays shining down on everybody's hair;

The sea swirling and curling round your wellies as you
walk in the water;

The twisting, turning yew trees by the entrance to
Church Island.

Andrew Wilkinson.

Only their best was, and is, good enough for anything to do with Menai;
and their best efforts are always most revealing, to teacher and child.
I wanted extended writing, and what I have is an extended experience.
Plant diolch.

APPENDIX D. Focused holistic scoring Part 1.

Samples of children's writing used to establish criteria.

Score Point 1.

Writing about a picture.

Heidi Jackson.

In the distance there is a strange Picture with a lot
of strengh things on it there is a bridge with a
waterfall there was a kind of cave with a kind of dragon
and a kind of person carring something in her had there

Writing about a picture.

Roger Millington

There is a Picture wierd and strage,
With a space man, a space ship as well
When I saw it, it was very strange,
weird and strange weird and strange,
it was very very strange.

Writing about a picture

Hayley Edwards

There is a man how is sitting on a pise of wood and rait
nire him is a space man and I think he is a pink marcen
and about there is to winndows and I think there was a
exsosen (explosion) and to men fell thow windows, and there
is a rocket there

Writing about a picture

Garry Wilson

There is a spase man and a thork on the plmit I thinck it
could be a rocket and there is a tow men Jumping f'row Glass
one on each side and there is a ufo with a peme (beam) of lite
and there is a rocket and there is most unyouawall (unusual)
dragon with pinc a Bluw Green and red and there is a Pole made
of stown with Gardse arouwnd the Botom and there is a old man
siting on a Box.

Score Point 2.

Writing about a picture.

Timothy Lewis

The weird picture.

There was a giant space rocket

With little space men going in and out.

There was a dragon down at the bottom of the picture

With men by it chained up.

A little dragon was by a shield having a sleep,

A flying saucer had crashed and another was flying
over A church.

A chest had a sign like a house on

And some strange people had the same sign on.

There was a red and white flying saucer on the grass.

A person like a cartoon character was fishing

And a goast like man was sitting by a cave.

A plane was flying by.

There was a man hole in a little hill

With a little mans head near it.

There was a stone with a house sign on

And the cave that the goast like man was sitting by
had the same sign

A man was coming through a stane (stained) glass window

And a black shadowy man was coming through
anoughter window at the other side of the picture

APPENDIX D. Focused holistic scoring Part 1.

Score point 2.

Writing about a picture

Clare Rich

On a picture in our Classroom that our teacher put up in our class has got some very unewsual thing in it like a house under a bridge and a space rocket to with strange looking men out side it and a woman in rags and there are five wizards in the picture and it is like a other plant on a other world and some of it look's like a church in some part's of it and it look's very nice on the wall in our classroom nexted to the Blackboard and there is a window in the picture ther it looks like someone is Jumping out of the window.

Writing about a picture

Paul Lawrence

The picture.

Mrs Cowley brought a picture in today of a funny planet. It shows a rocket and the space men haveing a look around they found a dragon a house over a waterfall there is a man with a mark on His that looks like this In the picture it looks like a church.

Writing about a picture

David Mines.

In the distant ships flying

they look like glass in the air.

The ships give light flying over house

Bang Bang the windows go

opening and cloving. A dragon

wating for his dinner to come men are coming out

of the ships go Bang with it lanans (lands).

Score Point 2.

Writing about a picture.

Christopher Butters

There is a picture on wall.

Some of the colurs are very dull.

There are arches colured gray.

In the trees ther might be a dray.

There is a flying sauser in the sky

All the spacemen saying goodbye.

The picture was fifty pence.

Very good for a picture like that.

There are insects all over the place.

Score Point 3.

Writing about a picture

Louise Needham

The weird shapes opening as you come nearer and nearer, and strange flowing noises what are fascinating sounds. The arches seap and the blowing trees near by and the flying saucers over head high about us and helicoptous Living traouts (thoughts) of fire and steam gleaming class sparkline deeply in the Lake. House under neath the bridge, weird people walking round looking at the beautiful building.

Writing about a picture.

Lisa Armstrong

There is a dragon that is ferce and long he is dull and it has got pink and it has Got blue blobs and the dragon is sharped like a snake and there is a man that is a space men and he likes the the dragon that is ferce and he feeds the dragon he is not sceared and there is men thet are like a wizeird there is a tall arch with a ladder to set up in to the wizeird and there arch is a funney sort of house and it is a funney sherped fase and there are all sorts of sherpes and sizes and there are all sorts of dull calours.

Writing about a picture.

Jason Baker.

On a pitcher thats vearty strange is some water as bright as cloudes and in the cloudes ther is a plane as red as Dawn and in the midle ther is a rocket wich is as gray as a stone and ther is a flying glass that falls from the widow in the chrh (church) and by the chrh is a bridge with a waterfall wich is transparent

APPENDIX D. Focused holistic scoring Part.1

Score Point 3.

and ther is a blacky yellow dragon that looke like a
snake and I see an old woman in rags and ther is five
wizards around the rocket and ther are some selgers
and some trees as green a paint and ther is a man
from out off space

Writing about a picture.

Nicky Bridgeman

The Flying Serser the Funny Spase man are all my
favarat Carrietter's but the funny littel dragon the
Sliy littel dragon is Wating to go in his Cave. the
gostly Wizad's the wead drawing on the Piller's the
Galent Knight whith ther Sords and Shealey.

Writing about a picture.

Kevin Shepherd.

Sceletons in a box.

Dragon's are brown silver and brit as gold.
they cill like dragen fire springs out of mowf and
tung will spring out of mouf like fire and flames
the bragen like rockes and cils lots of people robots spash men.
The bragn luked like it had res from heven.

APPENDIX D Focused holistic scoring Part 1.

Score Point 4.

Writing about a picture.

Sally Hough.

The strange world has just begone.

Hear the Water Fall,

Bucket after Bucket,

The Wriird men climbing down the ladder,

All the fantastic shapes and sizes,

The strange world has just begane.

The man jumping through the painful glass,

The aeroplane wizzing by.

All the lovley winter greens,

Among the lovley cool breeze.

The dragon and it spikey wings,

The smoke coming out of its nose,

The delicate brige is going to fall,

The flying sucer going by.

The Dragon is Near.

Anthony Ogden

The dragon comes behind me,

I can feel it is hot as a volcano lit with all its fire.

The scaley back is hot with smoke,

It is the colour of slime in a pond,

Its stange Face is lit up in the moonlight,

The dragon is not fast or slow but the dragon slivers along,

Steam is riseing into the sky,

He goes bright red with anger like a rose in colour,

But now he goes away into the distdent Far away.

Score point 4.

Writing about a picture.

Karl Gibson

The Strange Picture.

Giant arches overhead covered in vines and miss,
Hiding strange and exciting things,
A plane curls upwards in the sky
Leaving a vapour trail,
Behind the pak (park) transparent glass
A spaceship lands,
And with surprise a little figure
Jumps out from inside,
The size of a dwarf;
Under the bridge a waterfall runs,
There is a crevasse and in it runs
A mighty river.
In the corner by its river a snaky dragon
Points his head as if he's going to bite the sky,
By the road a ghostly figure sits
Like the devil himself watching and listening,
For the sound of death,
And a spaceman stands
With a piece of paper in his hand
In the picture.

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